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55

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CONTENTS

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By the Course Indicated by Lenin [Editorial]	1
Outstanding Victory of Soviet Army [Ye.F. Ivanovskiy]	5
Strategic Soviet Troop Regroupings in Preparation of 1942-1943 Winter Campaign [V.T. Yeliseyev]	13
Raid to Tatsinskaya [E.V. Porfiryev]	19
Combat of 87th Rifle Division in Kotelnikovskiy Operation (15-31 December 1942) [V.A. Runov]	25
Experience of Military Scientific Society Under Kiev District Officer Club [A.I. Kozhevnikov]	29
RVGK Artillery in First Period of War [N.Ye. Medvedev]	31
Articles not translated in <i>Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal</i> , No 11, Nov 87	37
Publication Data	37

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By the Course Indicated by Lenin

18010066a Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 87 (signed to press 23 Oct 87) pp 3-9

[Editorial, published under the heading "The 70th Anniversary of Great October," "By the Course Indicated by V.I. Lenin"]

[Text] The 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution is a major holiday of the Soviet people. The farther we move from this great date, 7 November 1917, the clearer becomes the historic significance of the proletarian revolution of a victorious people who has overthrown the yoke of capitalist slavery. The victory of October brought liberty to the workers of our motherland and established the power of the soviets, as well as equality and fraternal collaboration. A single Soviet people came into being united by strong friendship, proud of their achievements and ready to defend their homeland against all encroachments. "Our revolution is the most outstanding event of the 20th Century," points out the Appeal of the CPSU Central Committee, "which ushered in the start of a new age in the life of mankind. Time has thoroughly disclosed its permanent importance and has brought out the gigantic opportunities which socialist social development provides."(1)

The October Revolution, the armed defense of its victories and the building of socialism are linked with the name of Vladimir Ilich Lenin who pointed out the way to achieve victory. The name of the leader of the Bolshevik party has become the symbol of the victory of October and of the major revolutionary accomplishments which fundamentally altered the sociopolitical appearance of the world. Lenin at present is with us: the restructuring is establishing evermore deeply a revolutionary Leninist spirit in the life of the party and the nation. We are rereading and more profoundly analyzing Lenin's works on war and peace, on the defense of the socialist fatherland and on the ways of building socialism in order to thoroughly master the Leninist method of carrying out the most complicated tasks.

With each new turn in history, one can see particularly clearly how Leninism, in being the most advanced revolutionary teaching, had its impact upon the development of human society. V.I. Lenin, as was pointed out by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, M.S. Gorbachev, "hoped on his followers who would be faithful to the cause of socialism, to the cause to which he devoted his vivid life. He believed that they would

creatively develop his teachings."(2) The cause of Lenin is continuing today. The restructuring commenced by the April (1985) Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, the essentially revolutionary, creative work, is a continuation of the cause of October. Its aim is to carry out the principles and ideals of the socialist revolution, to accelerate the progress of a new society, to transform all aspects of its life on a basis of Leninism which is successively and creatively being developed by our party. Characteristically precisely the party has found primarily the strength and courage to analyze directly and frankly, profoundly and realistically in a Leninist manner the pernicious overlays of previous decades, to seek out the causes of mistakes and oversights, to raise the people to clear the path of all that is stagnant and to break the discovered "mechanisms of inhibition." The revolutionary renewal of all aspects of the life of the CPSU is being carried out on the basis of Leninist experience, in relying on the creative activeness of the masses. At the April (1985) Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, at the 27th Congress and at the subsequent plenums, the party proudly raised high the banner of Leninism, having decisively rejected the dogmatic attempts to divorce theory from practice, and to reduce revolutionary ideas to a status of superficial propaganda phraseology which covers up and justifies inertia in practical work and cowardice of thought.

The theoretical depth and vital force of Marxism-Leninism have been most clearly manifested in the elaboration of new political thinking which is based upon the Leninist idea permeated by profound dialectics of peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems as this provides a reliable basis for a correct analysis of the present and future of our contradictory but interdependent and largely integrated world.

In the documents of the 27th CPSU Congress on the level of developing Lenin's teachings about the defense of the victories of Great October, great attention is given over to the conclusions concerning the strengthening and improving of the military organization of the Soviet state and its Armed Forces and the major tasks confronting them in ensuring readiness to repel any aggression.

The historical practice of building socialism and the experience of defending the socialist fatherland against aggression convincingly affirm that the more consistently the ideas of Leninism are embodied in life, the greater the successes. Conversely, a retreat from the legacy of Lenin, from the principles and standards elaborated by him in the area of party and state life and military affairs lead to negative phenomena. These are mistakes in policy, stagnation in work, omissions in the indoctrination of people and in forming social awareness as well as certain miscalculations in preparing the army and the country to repel aggression, as occurred on the eve of the Great Patriotic War. Due to the violation of the Leninist principles of socialist legality, harm was

done to the battleworthiness of the Army and Navy as a result of the unsound repression of a large number of the command and political personnel.

After repelling the first invasion by international imperialism of the Soviet nation, socialist construction under peacetime conditions was directed by V.I. Lenin who clearly foresaw the great future of our nation, in disclosing the prospects of its powerful economic and cultural rise. In March 1918, he wrote: "We have the material both in the natural riches, in the supply of human forces, and in the fine scope which was given to the creativity of the people by the great revolution in order to create a 'ruly powerful and abundant Russia.'"(3)

The construction of socialism commenced in a situation of economic chaos and collapse. For many years the USSR alone resisted world capitalism and was continuously subjected to imperialist pressure and blackmail. It was essential to work at full tilt and live denying oneself the most essential. But we endured and achieved successes both in constructing socialism and in strengthening the nation's defense might.

Simultaneously with the construction of socialism, at the center of attention for the party and the Soviet state were the questions of strengthening the defense capability of the nation and its Armed Forces. In solving this problem the party followed the course indicated by V.I. Lenin. "Without relying on the blows already dealt to imperialism," emphasized Vladimir Ilich, "we must preserve our Red Army at whatever the cost in full combat readiness and strengthen its combat capability."(4)

The task of the economic rebirth of the entire nation, the establishing of industry and agriculture and the strengthening of defense should be carried out, in Lenin's mind, "on a modern technical basis which rests on modern science, technology and electricity."(5) In following Lenin's path, the Soviet people under the leadership of the party by the end of the 1930s had created a strong material and technical base.

The development of the socialist economy, science and technology ensured the growth of the nation's military might and the combat might of its Armed Forces and helped to achieve victory over the armies of Nazi Germany and militaristic Japan. Soviet industry was able not only to satisfy in quantitative terms our defense needs but also develop what for those times were the best military and technical systems. Our tanks, aircraft, cannons, automatic small arms in terms of their performance were unsurpassed over the entire period of the war. But no matter how advanced our military equipment was, the decisive role in a war belongs to man.

V.I. Lenin profoundly realized that in the commencing age of rapid development for scientific and technical progress in military affairs, the role of the human factor

and the importance of educated and highly skilled people would rise sharply. The party has applied and is applying enormous effort to indoctrinate steadfast fighters who are loyal to the cause of Marxism-Leninism and to their socialist motherland, ready for hardships and even self-sacrifice for the sake of the victory of a just cause. The result of this work was the feat of our people during the years of the Civil and Great Patriotic Wars as well as in the execution of international duty by the Soviet troops during the various stages of the history of the Soviet state.

In indoctrinating high morale, V.I. Lenin gave great importance to party political work in the Army and Navy: "Where discipline is the firmest, where political work in the troops and the work of the commissars are carried out most carefully...there is no laxness in the army, its order and spirit are better there and there are greater victories."(6)

The Communist Party, in following Lenin's legacy, has constantly directly party political work in the Army and Navy at successfully carrying out the tasks confronting them and has improved its content, the forms and methods in terms of the specific historical conditions. The Decree of the January (1987) Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee emphasizes that in the future it is essential to raise the responsibility of the commanders, the political workers, all the officer personnel and the Army and Navy party organizations for maintaining military discipline on a high level, for the ideological and moral indoctrination of the men, and for their military and political training.

In the postwar period, the Soviet people under the leadership of the party have successfully eliminated the consequences of the war. The economy, science and technology have developed, the socialist economic system has grown stronger, the material and cultural standard of living of the Soviet people has risen, while the international position of the USSR and all the socialist commonwealth countries has grown stronger.

The growing capabilities of the Soviet economy, science and technology have made it possible to arm the Army and Navy with first-rate combat equipment and have ensured the strengthening of the nation's military might. As a result, military-strategic parity has been achieved between the USSR and United States, the Warsaw Pact and NATO.

The successes of the Soviet Union over the last seven decades are convincing proof that socialism provides a development rate for all aspects of social life. However, at the turning point of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, in our society stagnant trends arose and difficulties, unsolved problems and phenomena alien to socialism began to build up.

Negative processes were also discovered in historical science, including in military history. Certain authors of historical works have neglected the demands of science and objectivity and accuracy as seen from the position of Leninism, they have been guilty of subjectivism and personal prejudice in assessing and reassessing not only individual historical events and figures but also entire periods of history and profound social processes and out of self-promoting considerations have been silent about the blank spots. "From the rostrums they spoke about truth but in fact rewrote even the sacred history of the Great Patriotic War which is known to millions of Soviet people not just from books." (7) This has occurred even in fundamental works which have been given high praise in reviews published in many newspapers and magazines. One has merely to read the six-volume work "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [History of the Great Patriotic War] and the 12-volume "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945] to be convinced of this.

It is essential to boldly and decisively draw lessons from the past, as was done at the 27th CPSU Congress. The first of these is the lesson of truth and objectivity in history.

There are even those who would break the link of time in the area of domestic military history. The reader sees few books on Russian military history of the pre-October period and even on the history of the Civil War and military intervention. Among the officer personnel of the Soviet Armed Forces at present there is not a single doctor of sciences on the designated periods of military history.

The party Central Committee has come out in favor of reexamining our affairs with revolutionary decisiveness and in a Leninist manner in the economic and social spheres and in the social awareness of the masses of people. As a result of carrying out the concept worked out by the 27th Party Congress of accelerating socio-economic development, the nation will quickly reach new limits and climb to new heights of social progress.

The Decree of the January (1987) Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee emphasizes that the complex international situation requires a rapid increase in economic potential and a complete strengthening of the nation's defense capabilities.

In the future development of the nation, science is to play a special role. The CPSU Program states: "Party policy in the scientific area is aimed at establishing favorable conditions for dynamic progress in all areas of knowledge, at concentrating the personnel, the material and financial resources on the most promising areas which should accelerate the achieving of the set economic and social goals, the spiritual development of society and ensure dependable defense capability for the nation." (8)

Thus, the place in the theory and practice of socialist construction is now held by priority goals put forward by the profound needs of economic and social progress for the new society.

Lenin's ideas on the defense of the socialist fatherland have gained creative development in the course of the revolutionary restructuring.

In the Party Program, this aspect of the problem has been expressed also in terms of state functions: "The CPSU views the defense of the socialist fatherland, the strengthening of national defense and the guaranteeing of state security as one of the most important functions of the Soviet state." (9)

These ideas, as in the Second Party Program adopted by the 8th Congress of the RKP(b) [Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)] in March 1919, embody the program demands and attitude of the Leninist party to one of the most important questions of its military policy. These are completely coordinated with its peace-loving foreign policy course and are concretized in Soviet military doctrine which is based upon the provisions of Lenin's teachings about the defense of the victories of the socialist revolution. In contrast to the aggressive military policy of the United States and its NATO allies, this has a strictly defensive nature and is aimed at protecting the socialist fatherland and in preserving peace in the world.

The essence of modern military doctrine in the socialist countries has been formulated with maximum clarity in the document "On the Military Doctrine of the Warsaw Pact States" adopted at the Conference of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact States in May 1987 in Berlin. This doctrine is strictly defensive, and proceeds from the view that under present-day conditions the employment of military force for resolving any disputed question is inadmissible. The very essence of military doctrine expresses new views on military organizational development and the problems of preventing war as well as new political thinking which with such tenacity is being introduced into the fabric of the international relations of the USSR and the other socialist commonwealth countries.

Our party is constantly working to develop the process of a lessening of international tension. To preserve and strengthen peace, to eliminate the threat of a world war and to achieve universal security and disarmament are one of the main areas in CPSU international policy.

Great October opened up a new era of world history, the era of revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism. The defense of the socialist revolutions, as has been shown by the experience of the development of the world revolutionary process in the post-October period, has become an international duty for the working class and all toilers.

Having defended the victories of Great October, the Red Army also defended the vital interests of not only its own people but also the workers of the entire world, as the fate of the Russian revolution and the international communist movement was settled on the battlefields of the Civil War. For this reason the victory of the revolution and the defense of its victories during the years of the Civil War assumed the greatest international significance. "In protecting Soviet power," emphasized V.I. Lenin, "we provide the best, the strongest support to the proletariat of all countries in its unbelievably difficult and harsh struggle against its bourgeoisie."(10)

Inspired by the unstinting struggle of the peoples in the world's first soviet country, thousands of citizens from foreign countries in Russia with weapons in hand came to the defense of the victories of the proletarian revolution.

During the years of the Great Patriotic War, the representatives of many countries who were loyal sons of their peoples and ardent patriots fought heroically against the Nazi invaders. As a result of the victory over Nazism, socialism was turned from a national force, as V.I. Lenin foresaw, into an international force.

Lenin's ideas on the international nature of the defense of socialism have been confirmed by the establishing of the Warsaw Pact in May 1955. Solidarity and unity and the pooling of efforts of the socialist commonwealth countries have become a truly effective factor making it possible for them to defend the security and sovereignty of the fraternal states and to block the path of the proponents of military adventures.

V.I. Lenin gave great importance to the training and indoctrination, to the correct placement and recruitment of personnel in party, Soviet, economic and military development. In the course of the revolutionary restructuring in our days, the Communist Party has strictly followed Lenin's principles. This is most vividly apparent from the January (1987) Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee which examined the question of the restructuring and cadre policy in the party.

V.I. Lenin left an enormous heritage on the questions of military science and military art. The victory over international imperialism during the years of the Civil War and over Nazism during the period of the Great Patriotic War as well as the prevention of a new world war for more than 40 years have shown that the party is strictly following a Leninist course.

In his military activities, V.I. Lenin gave enormous importance to the questions of increasing vigilance and to a high degree of troop combat readiness. At the 11th Congress of the RKP(b), he said that we should be on guard and we should make certain heavy sacrifices for the sake of the Red Army, in strictly measuring the degree of these sacrifices.

The report of Comrade M.S. Gorbachev at the January (1987) Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee pointed out that the Soviet people and our party have confidence in their Armed Forces. They are doing everything to strengthen them and rightly believe that no aggressive forces will catch us unaware.

V.I. Lenin could not conceive of the combat capability and readiness of the Army and Navy without iron military discipline and responsibility for observing revolutionary legality. "The person who now retreats from order and discipline lets the enemy into our camp."(11)

This Leninist thesis is of primary significance under present-day conditions. Unfortunately, far from all the military personnel conscientiously and clearly carry out their duty and obligations. "It is essential," pointed out the Candidate Member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee, the USSR Minister of Defense, Army Gen D.T. Yazov, "to look the truth in the face: some of us have lost our feeling of duty and responsibility for performing our obligations and tasks."(12)

The Communist Party and its Central Committee give great attention to carrying out Lenin's legacy on strengthening one-man command under present-day conditions. The CPSU Program states that the party considers it essential to further strengthen its organizing and directing influence on the life and activities of the Armed Forces, to strengthen one-man command, to raise the role and influence of the political bodies and party organizations of the Soviet Army and Navy and see to it that the vital link of the Army with the people grows even stronger.

The creative use of military history experience considering the new demands of the present stage in the development of military affairs under the conditions of rapid scientific and technical progress helps to improve the combat capability and readiness in all the Armed Services and branches of troops.

The principles for approaching past experience have been set down by V.I. Lenin who pointed out that it is essential to look "at the past solely from the viewpoint of what will be needed tomorrow or the day after tomorrow for our policy."(13) Under peacetime conditions one of the most important areas for improving the combat readiness of the Army and Navy is the maneuvers and exercises where they work through the questions of the bold introduction into the training and indoctrination process of all that is new which has been created by military thought and by the experience of troop training and which to the greatest degree meets the requirements of their combat readiness.

To disclose profoundly and thoroughly the ever-growing effect of the ideas of V.I. Lenin—the leader and organizer of the Great October Socialist Revolution—on the development of military affairs and on the strengthening of the nation's defense capability is a most important and honorable task for military history science.

Thus, in resolving the key tasks of developing socialism, the questions of war and peace, the strengthening of the military might of the Soviet state and the combat might of its Armed Forces under the conditions of restructuring, the Communist Party is strictly following the force set out by the great Lenin. The party is resolving the problem of reliable defense for the victories of socialism on a basis of strengthening the political, economic, scientific-technical, moral and specifically the military potentials.

In defining the tasks of increasing the effectiveness of organizational and ideological work in the Soviet Armed Forces, the party thoroughly analyzes and considers the international situation, the balance of class forces in the modern world, the development level of the Soviet economy, science and technology, the spiritual forces of our society and those complicated processes which characterize the development of military affairs.

The Leninist party is honorably performing the role of political leader in Soviet society, it is carrying out the creative program put forward by the 27th CPSU Congress and it is leading the Soviet people along the road of October to new successes in the construction of communism.

Footnotes

1. "To the Soviet people. Appeal of the CPSU Central Committee," *Pravda*, 14 March 1987.
2. Ibid., 20 May 1987.
3. V.I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 36, p 80.
4. Ibid., Vol 42, p 130.
5. Ibid., Vol 41, p 307.
6. Ibid., Vol 39, p 56.
7. *Kommunist*, No 4, 1987, p 6.
8. "Materialy XXVII syezda KPSS" [Materials of the 27th CPSU Congress], Moscow, Politizdat, 1986, p 167.
9. Ibid., p 160.
10. V.I. Lenin, PSS, Vol 35, p 392.
11. Ibid., Vol 44, p 167.
12. *Krasnaya zvezda*, 18 July 1987.
13. V.I. Lenin, PSS, Vol 38, p 136.

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Outstanding Victory of Soviet Army

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23 Oct 87) pp 44-53

[Article, published under the headings: "Soviet Military Art" and "On the 45th Anniversary of the Stalingrad Battle," by Army Gen Ye.F. Ivanovskiy, Hero of the Soviet Union: "An Outstanding Victory of the Soviet Army"]

[Text] The event which is presently being celebrated by the Soviet people and all progressive mankind brings our memory back to the fierce engagements of 1942-1943 in the interfluvium of the Volga and the Don and which have gone down in history under the over-all name of the Battle of Stalingrad. This battle gained world historical importance because our victory in it made an enormous contribution to achieving a fundamental change in the course of the Great Patriotic War and had a preponderant effect on the further course of the entire World War II. The Soviet Armed Forces wrested the strategic initiative from the enemy and until the war's end imposed their will on it. The defeat of the large enemy grouping in the Battle of Stalingrad sapped the military might of Nazi Germany, it demonstrated the strength and invincibility of the socialist state and its army, it contributed to a consolidating of forces in the anti-Hitler coalition, it provided a new impetus for activating the antifascist and national liberation movement and had a determining influence on the position of the neutral countries.

The path to victory was not an easy one. The Soviet people and their Armed Forces had to endure great hardship. The Battle of Stalingrad lasted more than 6 months. In terms of the scope and fierceness of the fighting, in terms of the number of men, tanks, aircraft and artillery weapons involved, it surpassed all the previous engagements of World War II.

The Battle of Stalingrad, as is known, included the defensive (17 July- 19 November 1942) and offensive (19 November 1942—2 February 1943) strategic operations and in the course of these the Soviet troops at the approaches to Stalingrad and directly by the city walls ground down and bled white the Wehrmacht's main assault grouping and then defeated it in a brilliantly conceived and executed counteroffensive.

In the summer of 1942, in benefiting from the absence of a second front in Europe, the Nazi Command shifted significant forces from west to east and made a new attempt to achieve its strategic and political aims on the Soviet-German Front. After our setbacks in the Crimea and at Kharkov, the enemy succeeded in seizing the initiative and developing an offensive to the southwest. Regardless of the stubborn resistance by the Soviet troops, the enemy reached the large bend on the Don, captured Rostov and created a direct threat to Stalingrad and the Northern Caucasus.

Under these conditions, the Soviet Supreme High Command was forced to abandon the offensive plans and carry out the tasks of organizing and conducting a strategic defensive. The situation was particularly complex on the Stalingrad sector. Here the enemy surpassed our forces by 1.7-fold in personnel, by 1.3-fold in artillery and tanks, and by more than 2-fold in aviation.(1) The troops of the Southwestern and Southern Fronts, having been weakened in the previous fighting, were unable to prevent the danger of an enemy breakthrough to the Volga. For this reason the reestablishing of the strategic defensive front became the most important task and the strategic reserves played the major role in carrying this out. In line with this, Hq SHC [Headquarters Supreme High Command] began urgently to move the 62d, 63d and 64th Armies from the reserve to the line of the Don. On 12 July, the Stalingrad Front was established (commander, MSU S.K. Timoshenko, from 23 July, Lt Gen V.N. Gordov). In addition to the listed armies, the front also included the 21st, 28th, 38th and 57th Armies and the 8th Air Army and from 30 July, the 51st Army. The task of halting the further enemy advance was set for the troops of the newly established Stalingrad Front.

At the same time, the hurried constituting of the new armies and their moving up to the front line were a reason that a significant portion of the formations was not sufficiently trained, had not developed teamwork and was greatly understrength in men and combat equipment. These had to hastily take up the defensive on unprepared lines. As a result, the strategic aim of the defensive on the southwestern and southern sectors was achieved only after carrying out a series of successive defensive operations and here significant territory was lost.

The defensive engagements commenced on the distant approaches to Stalingrad on 17 July 1942 with the clash of the forward detachments of the 62d Army (commander, Maj Gen V.Ya. Kolpakchi, from August, Lt Gen A.I. Lopatin) and the 64th Army (commander, Lt Gen V.I. Chuykov) with troops from the 6th German Army in the great bend of the Don on the line of the Chir and Tsimla Rivers (Diagram 1). With the support of aviation from the 8th Air Army (commander, Maj Gen Avn T.T. Khryukin), our troops over a period of 6 days checked the advance of large enemy forces. This made it possible for the Soviet Command to judge the enemy grouping, to determine the axis of its main thrust and to gain time for improving its defenses on the main line.

The resistance put up by our troops in the forward security area caused the Nazi Command to reinforce the 6th Army with 6 divisions. By 22 July, it already included 18 divisions. As a result, the balance of forces shifted further in favor of the enemy. The engagement for the main defensive lines commenced under these conditions.

The enemy undertook several attempts to breach the defenses of the Stalingrad Front, to encircle its troops on the right bank of the Don, to reach the Volga and without a pause capture Stalingrad. By the heroic resistance of our troops the enemy was stopped. Over a period of 3 weeks of an offensive, the Nazi troops were able to advance only 60-80 km, paying in thousands of lives of their soldiers and officers for this. By 10 August, the Soviet troops had retreated to the left bank of the Don, they took up the defensive and halted the enemy.

However, the situation continued to remain complex. Having diverted divisions from the 4th Panzer Army from the Caucasian sector, the enemy was approaching the southwestern approaches to Stalingrad. On 23 August, enemy tanks broke through to the Volga to the north of the city. Street fighting broke out in the outskirts and within the city limits. The men of the 62d Army (from 10 September, commander, Lt Gen V.I. Chuykov) and the 64th Army (commander, Lt Gen M.S. Shumilov) particularly distinguished themselves in this fighting. By a stubborn defense of each block and house, by the launching of counterattacks at night and during the day, they ground down the enemy forces, stopped them at the city walls, creating conditions for their defeat.

In the heat of the engagements and battles on the distant and near approaches to Stalingrad, the art of the Soviet Command grew in organizing and conducting a deeply echeloned, stubborn and active defense. The configuration of the positions and lines was improved. The density of the antitank weapons and obstacles increased, the depth of their position rose and support for the boundaries and flanks was improved. Measures were taken to increase the operational depth of the defenses.

The bringing of the command and observation posts closer to the battle formations played a major role in improving the organization of cooperation and control. There was a trend toward the wide introduction of radio equipment into the control bodies. A network of aviation control and guidance posts was established directly in the battle formations of the combined-arms and tank formations.

The art of conducting battle reconnaissance was improved on the basis of combat experience. Reconnaissance subunits were incorporated in the TOE of the brigades, and the size of the reconnaissance sections of the corps and army was increased. This ensured the more skilled and effective carrying out of tasks in assembling data on the composition of the enemy assault groupings and reserves, its intentions and the possible nature of actions.

The role of artillery grew continuously in the defensive operations. Army and front artillery groups were organized in the aims of greater massing of fire. Artillery counterbombardment began to be carried out and as a result of this, the enemy suffered heavy losses. The

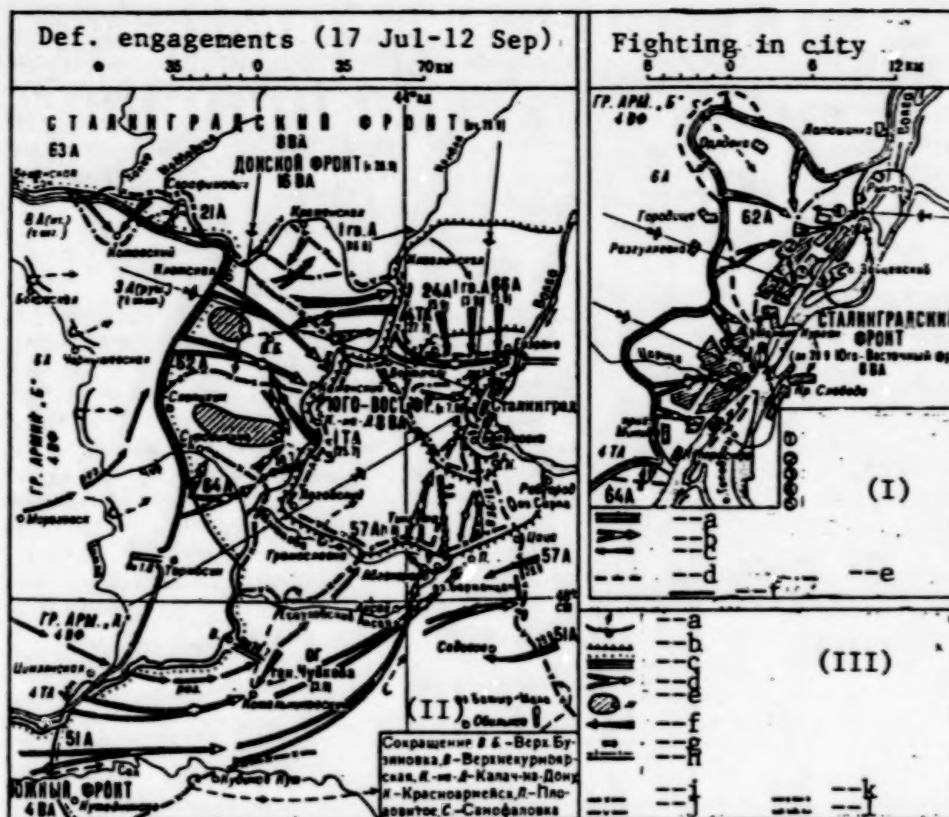


Diagram 1. Stalingrad Defensive Operation (17 July-18 November 1942)

- Key:
- (I) 1—9 January Square (Pavlov House)
2—Barrikady Plant
3—Kr. Oktyabr Plant
4—Tractor plant
5—Central Station
- (II) Abbreviations: V.B.—Verkh. Buzinovka; V.—Verkhnekurmoyarskaya;
K.-na-D—Kalach-na-Donu; K.—Krasnoarmeysk
P.—Plodovitoye; S.—Samofalovka
- (III) a—Position of forward detachments of 62d and 64th Armies by end of 16 July and their retreat
b—Defensive Soviet troop perimeters
c—Front line by end of 22 July
d—Axes of Soviet troop thrusts
e—Fighting in encirclement and breaking out of encirclement by Soviet troops
f—Soviet troop counterstrike
g—Volga Naval Flotilla
h—Position of left wing of 51st Army of Soviet troops by end of 29 July
i—Position of Soviet troops on 5-6 August
j—By end of 16 August
k—By end of 30 August
l—By end of 12 September
- a—Front line by end of 12 September
b—Axes of Nazi troop thrusts
c—Counterstrikes by Soviet troops
d—Position of Soviet troops by end of 26 September
e—By end of 13 October
f—By end of 18 November

artillery antitank reserves assumed great importance as the main maneuvering means for combating enemy tanks in the hands of the army and front commanders.

Activeness of the operational defensive was achieved by the extensive employment of maneuvering, by the launching of counterstrikes and counterattacks, and by carrying out partial offensive operations in the aim of recovering the lost position, thwarting the enemy's plans and reducing the rate of its advance. The maximum possible number of men and weapons, primarily tank and mechanized units and formations was employed for launching the counterstrikes and for carrying out the small-scale offensive operations. Thus, on 25-30 July, in the zone of the Stalingrad Front, counterstrikes were launched against the advancing enemy by the still incompletely organized 1st and 4th Tank Armies as well as by a portion of the 21st Army (commander, Maj Gen A.I. Danilov). While not leading to the defeat of the enemy, this caused it significant losses and thwarted its plans to encircle our troops on the defensive on the right bank of the Don and make a rapid push to the banks of the Volga. Somewhat later, in September-October, in the course of the fighting on the near approaches to Stalingrad and in repelling the enemy storming of the city, with air support small-scale offensive operations were carried out in the 24th Army (commander, Maj Gen I.V. Galanin), the 1st Guards Army (commander, Maj Gen Art K.S. Moskalenko) and the 66th Army (commander, Lt Gen R.Ya. Malinovskiy) to the northwest of Stalingrad. As a result of these, the Soviet troops captured a bridgehead on the Don and forced the enemy to divert a significant portion of the forces from the 6th Army to the north. This somewhat eased the situation of the city's defenders. The enemy's attempt to widen the front along the Volga was thwarted. "With full responsibility I can state," wrote MSU G.K. Zhukov, "that if there had not been the constant counterstrikes by the troops of the Stalingrad Front and systematic air strikes, things would possibly have been even worse for Stalingrad." (2)

The tactics of conducting close combat to a significant degree helped to raise the activeness and strength of the defense. The initiative of the commanders and soldiers and their creativity gave rise to new methods and procedures for fighting the enemy. For example, in order to escape from enemy aviation, to disrupt cooperation of enemy troops and disorganize their battle formations, the soldiers closed with the enemy to just scores of meters. Here the enemy aviation was unable to bomb our trenches as it feared hitting its own. The fire of the Nazi ground artillery often struck the battle formations of its own troops.

In the course of the Stalingrad street fighting, assault groups were widely employed. They were small in size, flexible in maneuvering and aggressive on the assault. The men of the groups closed with the enemy to a distance of a hand grenade throw, they penetrated the enemy positions through basements and holes in walls, they launched surprise attacks against the enemy from

the most unexpected directions, forcing on it a disadvantageous and rapid close combat. "The active counteroffensive actions of the assault groups," wrote MSU V.I. Chuykov, "were that defensive force which constantly kept the enemy in a state of tension. Under the blows of our subunits the enemy was forced to abandon not only buildings but also its own support points." (3)

When the enemy had captured a significant portion of the city and had taken the prevailing heights, including Mamayev Kurgan, the Soviet troops under difficult conditions honorably withstood all hardships. The city defenders vowed: "For us there is no land beyond the Volga." And the men stood til the death. At that time, it was an iron law that each house would be a fortress and the subunits defending it would be an invincible garrison. A vivid example of such actions was the defense of the Pavlov House in which a small group of Soviet troops for 58 days successfully checked the enemy's drive and did not retreat.

In the course of the defenses on the distant and near approaches to Stalingrad and in the city itself, the Nazi troops suffered enormous losses. During the summer and autumn of 1942 the enemy in the fight for Stalingrad lost around 700,000 killed and wounded, over 2,000 guns and mortars, over 1,000 tanks and more than 1,400 aircraft. (4)

By November 1942, our troops by their active defense had ground the enemy down to such a degree that it had exhausted itself and could no longer conduct an effective offensive. Time had been gained for forming large reserves and for concentrating them on the Stalingrad sector. The shift of the national economy to a wartime footing carried out under the leadership of the Communist Party and the mobilizing of the material and human resources of the nation made it possible to increase the combat might of the Soviet Army and eliminate the enemy's superiority in men and weapons on the southern wing of the Soviet-German Front. A favorable moment had arrived for launching decisive strikes against the enemy.

In the winter of 1942-1943, Hq SHC had resolved to carry out a series of offensive operations along the front from Lake Ladoga to the foothills of the Main Caucasus Range. Here primary importance was given to the counteroffensive at Stalingrad.

The choice of this sector was no accident. It stemmed from a scientific analysis of the situation and from a realistic assessment of the forces of the enemy and our troops. The question was that due to the strength and tenacity of the heroes of the Volga fortress, more than 50 enemy divisions were tied down in the Stalingrad area. The operational position of the main enemy assault grouping (the 6th Army and 4th Panzer Army) was extremely unfavorable. Both its flanks enveloped by our troops were covered by Hungarian, Italian and Romanian formations the strength and battleworthiness of

which were not sufficiently high. The enemy did not have any impressive reserves and this limited its defensive capabilities. All of this was taken into consideration by Hq SHC and even in the course of the defensive engagements took a decision to prepare and conduct a counteroffensive on the southwestern sector and one which would not only radically alter the situation in this area but also would lead to the collapse of the entire still actively fighting southern wing of the enemy front. The essence of the strategic plan was by attacks of the three fronts to defeat the troops covering the flanks of the enemy assault groupings and, in developing a pincer offensive on the axes of Kalach, Sovetskiy, to surround and destroy its main forces. The plan for the strategic offensive operation worked out by Hq SHC and the General Staff considering the proposals of the front commander, was given the code name Uran (Uranus). Playing a major role in its elaboration were Army Gen G.K. Zhukov, Col Gen A.M. Vasilevskiy, Col Gen Art N.N. Voronov, Lt Gen Avn A.A. Novikov and Lt Gen Tank Trps Ya.N. Fedorenko.

For achieving major military political and strategic goals in the counteroffensive at Stalingrad, it was essential to unite the efforts of three fronts: Southwestern (commander, Lt Gen N.F. Vatutin), Don (commander, Lt Gen K.K. Rokossovskiy) and Stalingrad (commander, Col Gen A.I. Yeremenko). This was the first successful attempt at conducting a strategic operation by a group of fronts in the aim of encircling and destroying a large enemy grouping. It is instructive in the fact that it was carried out with a virtual equality of forces for the sides. The most important prerequisites for the success of the operation were the correct choice of the axis, place and time of launching the assaults, covertness and carefulness in their preparation.

The Soviet Supreme High Command was able to ensure precise cooperation of the fronts, the aviation and combat arms along an enormous expanse with the participation of a large number of forces (14 combined-arms armies, 1 tank army, 3 air armies and several mechanized corps) in all stages of the counteroffensive, that is: in breaching the enemy defenses, continuing the offensive in the operational depth, establishing internal and external perimeters of encirclement and repelling the enemy counterstrikes.

Indicative was the experience of achieving covert preparations of the counteroffensive and surprise of the attacks. A special directive of the General Staff set down a range of measures the execution of which would exclude the leaking of information on the scope of the offensive, the start time and axes of the attacks and the methods of troop actions. The regrouping of an enormous number of formations and units and the concentrating of large reserves were carried out covertly, as a rule, under nighttime conditions and in bad weather.

Hq SHC took a realistic approach to setting the date for going over to the counteroffensive. This was set on the basis of the conclusion that the enemy's offensive capabilities had been exhausted, it had still not been able to

go over to the defensive, the reserves had been consumed and new ones were not expected in the near future. The psychological wretchedness of the enemy was also taken into account.

On 19 November 1942, the Southwestern Front and the 65th Army (commander, Lt Gen P.I. Batov) of the Don Front went over to the counteroffensive. The Stalingrad Front commenced its offensive on 20 November (Diagram 2).

The command of the fronts creatively carried out the plans of Hq SHC, it skillfully organized combat actions and clearly led the troops. The men and weapons were decisively assembled into a fist on the axis of the main thrust. Here they concentrated from 50 to 90 percent of the rifle troops, 80-90 percent of the tanks and SAU [self-propelled artillery mount], 56-67 percent of the weapons and mortars and a predominant part of the aviation. This made it possible even with an over-all equality in men and weapons with the enemy, to establish a 2-3-fold superiority on the sector of the main thrusts of the fronts and the breakthrough sectors of the armies.

In the operations the main thrust was launched against the most vulnerable points in the enemy defenses, where the main grouping of our troops could by the shortest route come out in the enemy flank and rear in the aim of defeating it. As a rule, the combined-arms armies launched one thrust while the fronts breached the enemy defenses on several sectors and in fighting along converging axes surrounded the enemy.

The basic aim in breaching the enemy defenses was to rapidly defeat the enemy forces in the tactical defensive zone and ensure conditions for committing the mobile groups and second echelons to battle in the aim of continuing the offensive in the operational depth. The breakthrough commenced with the dependable hitting of the enemy with massed artillery fire and air strikes. As a total on the fronts there were 250 artillery and mortar regiments numbering over 15,000 guns and mortars (2-fold more than in the Moscow counteroffensive). Here the basic mass of artillery supported the assault groupings and this made it possible to concentrate from 40 to 100 and more guns, mortars and rocket artillery vehicles per kilometer of breakthrough sector. For the first time in the breakthrough sectors there was a full artillery offensive which consisted in the artillery softening up of the breakthrough, continuous support for the attack and the subsequent escorting of the infantry and tanks to the entire depth of the day's task.

The commanders creatively employed various means and methods for utilizing the artillery. The length of the artillery softening up was increased to 80 minutes. In the course of the artillery softening up, after shifting fire deeper into the enemy defenses, there was extensive use of direct laying which neutralized the surviving enemy firing positions. Artillery support for the assault was

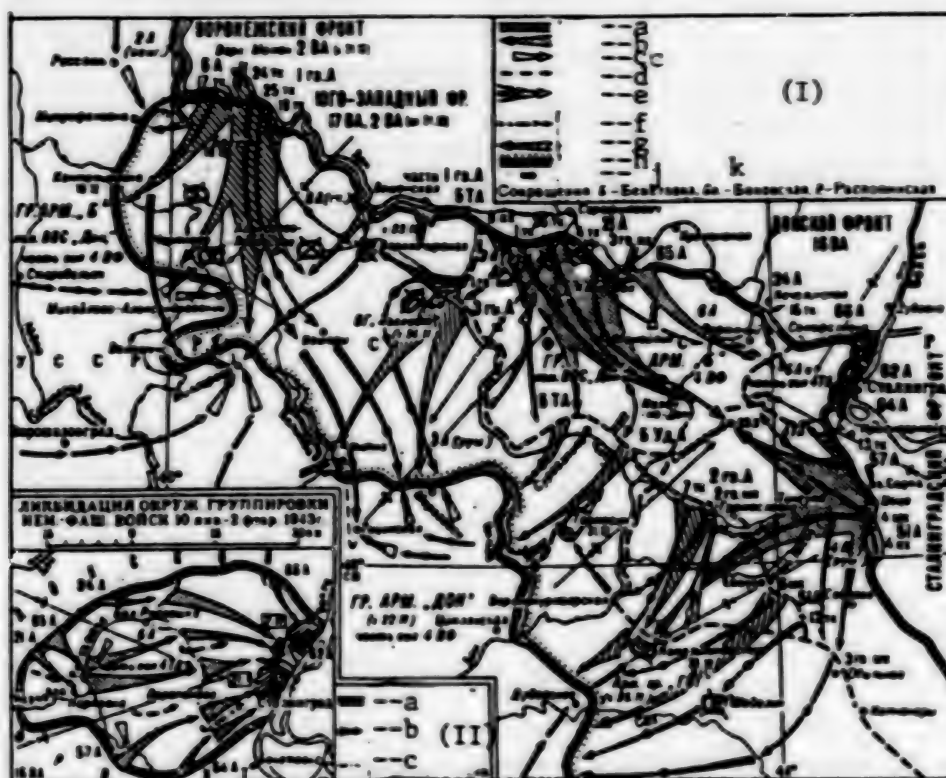


Diagram 2.

The Stalingrad Offensive Operation (19 November 1942-2 February 1943)

- Key:
- (I) a—Front line by end of 18 November
 - b—Axes of Soviet troop thrusts, 19 November-11 December
 - c—Nazi troop counterstrike
 - d—Position of Soviet troops by end of 11 December
 - e—Axis of Nazi troop counterstrike on Kotelnikovskiy axis, 12-23 December
 - f—Position of Soviet troops on Kotelnikovskiy sector by end of 23 December
 - g—Axes of Soviet troop thrusts, 16-30 December
 - h—Front line by end of 30 December
 - i—Volga Naval Flotilla
 - j—Abbreviations: B.—Beketovka, Bo.—Bokoskaya, R.—Raspopinskaya
 - (II) a—Front line by end of 9 January
 - b—Axes of Soviet troop thrust
 - c—Position of troops by end of 16 January

carried out not only by the method of the successive concentration of fire but also by the rolling barrage method employed on 10 January 1943 in the zone of advance of the 65th Army.

The role of artillery in the Battle of Stalingrad was very great. In commemoration of its accomplishments, in 1944 a holiday was established, Artillery Day (as of 1964, Rocket Troop and Artillery Day), which is celebrated annually on 19 November.

In the course of the operation, Soviet aviation successfully carried out the task of air supremacy by destroying enemy aircraft in the air and by launching massed strikes at enemy airfields. This played an important role in continuing the offensive and in organizing an active air blockade of the surrounded grouping. Aviation operations were organized in the form of an air offensive. This made it possible for the fronts and armies to more quickly shatter the enemy defenses and rapidly exploit success in the operational depth.

An important factor in the development of operational art was not only the massed employment of artillery and aviation but also the skillful and wide utilization of large tank and mechanized formations which made up the army follow-up echelon. For example, for completing the breakthrough of the enemy's tactical defensive zone and for exploiting the tactical success into an operational one, the command of the Southwestern Front committed three tank corps while the command of the Stalingrad Front committed a tank corps, a mechanized corps and a cavalry corps. This was a qualitative new phenomenon in the 1942-1943 winter campaign. The operations assumed a more decisive and maneuverable nature. The commitment of mobile groups to battle sharply increased the rate of advance of the combined-arms formations, it ensured the rapid shifting of efforts into the operational depth and contributed to the surrounding and destruction of large enemy groupings. The bold and daring actions of even small sized mobile groups contributed to the successful carrying out of operational-type tasks. There are numerous examples of this. Here is one. In the course of the offensive the commander of the 65th Army, Gen P.I. Batov, having shown initiative, quickly organized a mobile group. Having assembled all the tanks available to him, he mounted an infantry force on them and sent this around the enemy strongpoints. By attacks in the enemy flank and rear, the mobile group ensured the rapid advance of the remaining groups.

During pursuit there was a wide practice of sending out forward detachments. These without a pause captured road junctions, crossings and bridgeheads on water barriers and cut the enemy escape routes. The decisive actions by the forward detachments prevented the enemy from a planned pull-back of the troops to intermediate lines. This ensured the successful actions of our main forces.

As a whole in the course of the Stalingrad counteroffensive, the theory of combat in depth and an offensive operation in depth gained further practical embodiment. The Soviet Army made an enormous encirclement of the enemy. And the set goal was achieved in a short time. By 23 November 1942, the mobile formations of the Southwestern and Stalingrad Fronts had linked up in the area of Kalach, Sovetskiy. With the arrival of the rifle formations, a solid inner perimeter of encirclement was established. Some 22 divisions and over 160 separate enemy units totaling some 330,000 men was in the trap. Simultaneously the advancing troops, having moved up to 100 km in depth, established an external perimeter of encirclement which was over 500 km long.(5)

Having concentrated large forces to the southwest of Stalingrad, the Nazi Command on 12 December 1942 undertook an attempt to relieve its surrounded troops by a thrust from the Kotelnikovskiy area. The Soviet Command creatively approached the carrying out of tasks in the arising situation. The elimination of the surrounded grouping was put off until the danger on the external front had been removed. The Stalingrad Front by a stubborn defense on the line of the Myshkova River defeated the counterattacking enemy and then by attacking the flank and rear defeated the 4th Romanian Army while the 4th Panzer Army with heavy losses for it was pushed back to the Sal River. On 16 December, the Southwestern Front and the left wing of the Voronezh Front (commander, Col Gen F.I. Golikov) launched powerful strikes against the enemy on the Middle Don and defeated the main forces of the 8th Italian Army. Operations Group Hollidt and the vestiges of the 3d Romanian Army, having advanced up to 150-200 km to the south and southwest. Thus, good conditions were created for eliminating the enemy surrounded at Stalingrad.

The operation to defeat the surrounded enemy grouping resumed on 10 January 1943. It was given the code name Koltso [Ring]. It was carried out by the Don Front. A characteristic feature of the operation was the fact that the enemy grouping by a thrust from west to east had been split into two parts, each of which was eliminated separately. This plan was clearly carried out. By 26 January 1943, the enemy troops had been split. On 31 January, the southern group headed by Field Mar F. von Paulus ceased its resistance, and on 2 February, so did the northern one.

Thus, the rapid breaching of the enemy defenses, the use of mobile groups for rapidly developing the offensive and surrounding the enemy grouping, the virtually simultaneous formation of the internal and external perimeters of encirclement and the winning of air supremacy—these were the main distinguishing features for conducting the offensive operations in the interfluvium of the Don and Volga.

The thorough preparation of the troops, the growing combat skill of the military personnel, the self-sacrifice and heroism of the personnel ensured the carrying out of

the great plan to defeat the enemy and led to the great victory on the Volga. This was a triumph of Soviet military art. "As is known," wrote MSU A.M. Vasilevskiy, "the Nazi generals were completely infatuated with the idea of a Cannae, assuming that only they were capable of conducting an encirclement operation. They wrote disdainfully of the Soviet military leaders as incapable of attaining the mastery of troop leadership on the fields of modern war. However, it was precisely the Soviet military leaders who created the great Cannae of the 20th Century for the enemy at Stalingrad. Moreover, such a complex form of operational maneuver as a pincer offensive in the aim of surrounding the enemy troop groupings remained typical for the combat activities of the Red Army until the war's end."(6)

In the course of the Battle of Stalingrad which lasted 200 days and nights, the Nazi bloc lost one-quarter of its forces fighting at that time on the Soviet-German Front. As a result two German armies, one Romanian army and one Italian army were defeated. The catastrophe at Stalingrad, upon the admission of the Nazi Wehrmacht officers themselves, "overshadowed all military tragedies of the past."

The total enemy troop losses in the area of the Don, Volga and Stalingrad were around 1.5 million men, up to 3,500 tanks and assault guns, 12,000 guns and mortars, up to 3,000 aircraft and a large amount of other equipment. Such losses had a catastrophic impact on the general strategic situation and shook the entire military machine of Nazi Germany to its foundations.

The Soviet troops firmly took the strategic initiative, and created prerequisites for conducting major offensive operations in the Northern Caucasus, Upper Don in the area of Demyansk, Rzhev and for breaching the Leningrad blockade. The defeat of the Nazi troops at Stalingrad had an enormous impact upon the further course of hostilities on the Soviet-German Front. Precisely from Stalingrad, the war was inexorably turned to the west, from whence it had come; there began the massive expulsion of the invaders from Soviet territory.

The victory at Stalingrad was a feat of all the Soviet people. The Communist Party was the inspirer and organizer of this outstanding victory as it had been able to mobilize the human and material resources of the nation and focus them on achieving the most important military-political goal of achieving a fundamental turning point in the course of the war.

A significant role in successfully defeating the enemy troops was played by party political work of the military councils, the command of the fronts and armies, the political bodies, the party and Komsomol organizations which indoctrinated the men in confidence in their own forces, boldness, courage and mass heroism in carrying out the combat tasks.

The outstanding feat of the defenders of Stalingrad was highly praised by the motherland; tens of thousands of officers and soldiers received state decorations, 112 of the most outstanding men became Heroes of the Soviet Union, while the Volga fortress was given the title of Hero-City. Some 700,000 men were awarded the medal For the Defense of Stalingrad.

The combat experience of the Battle of Stalingrad has not lost its importance today, particularly under the conditions of the employment of conventional weapons. Maintaining their timeliness are the methods of preparing and conducting a defensive operation with the subsequent going over to a counteroffensive by a group of fronts and the organizing of their cooperation. Also instructive are the methods of repelling the enemy's attempts to liberate its surrounded grouping. Of significant value is the approach to the search for new effective forms for fire damage to the enemy, organizing close cooperation of the diverse forces, complete support for the operations and the maintaining of firm troop control. The task of the military personnel presently is not only to study and analyze this rich combat experience of the last war but also to employ it creatively considering the changes which have occurred in military affairs and the present demands placed on the Soviet Armed Forces.

The Appeal of the CPSU Central Committee to the Soviet People on the Occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution emphasizes: "As long as the international reaction fosters the arms race, as long as it refuses to give up the policy of social revanche and crusades against socialism, the CPSU and the Soviet state will do everything necessary to maintain the defense might of our nation and the socialist commonwealth on a proper level. The Soviet people can be confident that we will never, under any circumstances, permit a military superiority of imperialism."(7)

In celebrating the 45th anniversary of the defeat of the Nazi troops at Stalingrad during the year of the glorious 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the Soviet people pay tribute to all the soldiers of the hero city on the Volga who for the centuries to come have brought glory to our country and the Soviet Armed Forces and they bow their heads to the bright memory of those who gave up their lives for the freedom and independence of the socialist motherland.

Footnotes

1. "Vtoraya mirovaya vojna: Itogi i uroki" [World War II: Results and Lessons], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1985, p 61.
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3. V.I. Chuykov, "Nachalo puti" [The Start of the Path], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1959, p 328.

4. "50 let Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR" [Fifty Years of the USSR Armed Forces], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 323.

5. "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna 1941-1945: Entsiklopediya" [The Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945: An Encyclopedia], Moscow, Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, 1985, p 684.

6. "Stalingrad: uroki istorii" [Stalingrad: Lessons of History], Moscow, Progress, 1980, p 23.

7. *Pravda*, 14 March 1987.

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Strategic Soviet Troop Regroupings in Preparation of 1942-1943 Winter Campaign

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[Article by Col V.T. Yeliseyev, candidate of historical sciences: "Strategic Soviet Troop Regroupings in Preparation of the 1942-1943 Winter Campaign"]

[Text] The military-political aims set by the Communist Party Central Committee and by the Soviet government for the winter of 1942-1943 consisted in a fundamental change in the course of the war, the liberating of the most important industrial and agricultural regions in the south of the nation, the breaking of the Leningrad blockade and the strengthening of the situation on the Moscow-Smolensk sector. For this attacks would have to be launched against the main enemy groupings which would not only lead to a turning point in the armed combat on the Soviet-German Front but would also have a decisive influence on the entire course of World War II.(1)

The over-all plan of Hq SHC was to defeat the enemy grouping in the interfluvium of the Volga and Don and then launch attacks in the Northern Caucasus, the Upper Don and against Leningrad. In order to tie down the enemy and impede its opportunities for maneuvering forces, there were plans to also conduct offensive operations in the areas of Velikiye Luki, Rzhev and Vyazma. Subsequently an offensive was to be developed on the Kursk-Kharkov axis and in the Donbass.(2)

The basic efforts of the Soviet Army were focused on the southwestern strategic sector. The defeat of the strong enemy grouping operating here (18 percent of the infantry formations and 29 percent of the tank formations on the Soviet-German Front) would make it possible to bring about a fundamental change in the course of the hostilities and seize strategic initiative.

In resolving the question of the grouping of the Armed Forces, Hq SHC considered the circumstance that more than 46 percent of all the enemy forces was fighting on the Leningrad and Moscow sectors.(3) For this reason, in preparing the main thrust in the south, Headquarters was unable to significantly weaken these sectors and was forced to keep large forces here. These forces were also essential here because on the western and northwestern sectors offensive actions were to be carried out after the thrust in the south.

The changes in the grouping of the Armed Forces during the period of preparing for the 1942-1943 winter campaign basically involved the withdrawal of the field forces and formations from the active fronts into the reserve of Hq SHC and the allocation of the armies, corps, divisions and brigades constituted and brought up to strength in the strategic reserve according to the axes and sectors of the Soviet-German Front.

On the northern sector of the front our troop grouping remained almost unchanged. During the period of preparing for the campaign, only two rifle divisions were removed from the Karelian Front and shifted to the northwestern strategic sector. On this front, in November 1942, the 7th Air Army was organized on the basis of the front's air forces and began combat.(4)

The changes in the Soviet troop grouping on the northwestern sector consisted of the following. On the Leningrad Front, in October, on the basis of the Neva Operations Group they constituted the 67th Army and in November, on the basis of the units and headquarters of the front's air forces, the 13th Air Army.(5) This front received just one tank brigade as reinforcements. Five rifle divisions, three rifle brigades and two air divisions were withdrawn from the Volkhov and Northwestern Fronts for bringing up to strength and for reconstituting. All the rifle formations were sent to the 1st, 2d and 3d Reserve Armies.

The headquarters of a rifle corps and three rifle divisions were shifted from the northwestern to the western sector as part of the 1st Reserve Army. In addition, one (the 19th Guards) rifle division was moved from the Volkhov Front to the Kalinin.(6) On the southwestern sector, the headquarters of the IV and VI Guards Rifle Corps were regrouped to the 4th Reserve Army located in the Rtishchevo area (to the northwest of Saratov), and one rifle brigade was shifted to the Volga Military District.

In the autumn of 1942, as a result of the regroupings the fronts of the northwestern sector received two rifle divisions from the Karelian Front, a rifle division and two rifle brigades from the 3d Reserve Army, a rifle brigade and a combat engineer brigade from the Moscow Military District and a rifle division from the 4th Reserve Army. In addition, these fronts received 68,000 men in draft reinforcements from 1 October through 20 November 1942.

On the western strategic sector, the greatest changes were in the grouping of the Kalinin Front. From the Moscow Military District, the front was reinforced by the VI Rifle Corps (a division and four brigades) and the III Mechanized Corps (two tank brigades and three mechanized brigades),(7) by two rifle brigades, two tank brigades and two mechanized brigades. Hq SHC turned over to the front from its reserve the V Guards Rifle Corps and the VIII Rifle Corps (three divisions), a combat engineer brigade and five air corps (two bomber, four ground attack and three fighter air divisions). In addition, the front received two rifle divisions from the Moscow Defensive Zone and from the northwestern sector. Two tank brigades of the front were removed for reconstituting to the Moscow Military District, one fighter air division for deconstituting and another to the RVGK [Reserve of Supreme High Command]. A rifle division and a rifle brigade were moved to the adjacent Western Front. By December, more than one-quarter of the rifle formations making up the Kalinin Front was comprised of units arriving in the preparatory stage of the campaign after the strategic regroupings.

The Western Front received as reinforcements from the Moscow Military District the X Tank Corps (two tank brigades and one motorized rifle brigade) and a tank brigade, and from the strategic reserve two artillery divisions, two antiaircraft artillery divisions and a motorized rifle brigade, and from the Kalinin Front, a rifle division and a rifle brigade. Leaving for the Moscow Military District for bringing up to strength and reconstituting were six tank brigades, and for the RVGK the headquarters of the V Guards Rifle Corps, a motorized rifle division, a fighter air division and two ground attack air divisions. A rifle division (for the 4th Reserve Army)(8) was shifted to the southwestern sector as well as a tank brigade (for the Voronezh Front).

The Bryansk Front during October-November was reinforced from the RVGK with an artillery division, and from the Moscow Military District a rifle brigade and the V Mechanized Corps (three mechanized brigades), and incidentally the latter was soon thereafter shifted to the southwestern sector. It must be pointed out that virtually all the remaining changes in the effective strength of the Bryansk Front were involved with the regrouping to this strategic sector, including the withdrawal of the 5th Tank Army (two tank corps, three rifle divisions and a separate tank brigade) and the shifting of it to the Southwestern Front.

The regroupings within the western sector and the movements of troops here from the northwest and from here to the southwestern sector involved 78 divisions and brigades of the different combat arms and aviation; this comprised around 29 percent of these formations which were part of the Kalinin, Western and Bryansk Fronts on 1 October. During the preparations for the 1942-1943 winter campaign one rifle division arrived from the northwestern sector while 16 divisions and brigades were

dispatched to the southwestern sector from these fronts. During the nearly 2 months, the fronts of the western sector received over 102,000 men of draft reinforcements.

As a result of the strategic troop movements and other changes in the fronts of the western sector there were six more rifle divisions, three more artillery, three antiaircraft artillery and two air divisions, as well as one more rifle brigade, a ski brigade, a motorized rifle brigade, nine mechanized brigades and a combat engineer brigade. At the same time their strength was reduced by five tank brigades.

The southwestern sector included the troops of the Voronezh, Southwestern, Don and Stalingrad Fronts.

The troop grouping of the Voronezh Front, as a result of the strategic movements, changed in the following manner. The front received from RVGK the XV Rifle Corps (one division),(9) an artillery division, a rifle brigade and an engineer brigade. Two rifle divisions and a rifle brigade arrived from the western strategic sector, from the Moscow Defensive Zone and the Bryansk Front. A combat engineer brigade arrived from the Volga Military District. However, the strength of the Voronezh Front was significantly reduced as the RVGK received the XVII and XXIV Tank Corps (six tank brigades and two motorized rifle ones),(10) three rifle divisions and two bomber air divisions; the Southwestern Front received the VIII Cavalry Corps (three divisions), a rifle division, two fighter divisions, a bomber division and two ground attack air divisions; the XVIII Tank Corps (two brigades), two rifle brigades and two tank brigades were transferred to the Volga Military District. As a whole, by 1 September, the size of the front was increased by a rifle division and an artillery division, but on the other hand was less by three cavalry divisions and seven air divisions, by two fortified areas, five tank brigades and one motorized rifle brigade.

The Southwestern Front was established by the directive of Hq SHC of 22 October 1942.(11) Without any regrouping its strength included the 21st Army and the 63d Army (1st Guards and subsequently 3d Guards) of the Don Front as well as the 5th Tank Army which was shifted from the Bryansk Front and the 17th Air Army which was being organized.(12) Of the 60 divisions and brigades of all the combat arms and the aviation located on the Southwestern Front by 1 December, almost 87 percent was made up of those which had been included in it as a result of the strategic regroupings.

The largest number of the designated formations was shifted to the front from the RVGK (six rifle divisions, an artillery division, an air division and two brigades of the engineer troops) and from the Bryansk Front (three rifle divisions, five tank brigades, three motorized brigades and a motorized rifle brigade). Four rifle divisions, five cavalry divisions and a tank brigade were shifted from the adjacent Voronezh and Don Fronts. The Volga

Military District turned over to the Southwestern Front the XVIII Tank Corps (three tank brigades and a motorized rifle brigade) and the I Guards Mechanized Corps (three mechanized brigades). Arriving from the Moscow Military District were two tank brigades and a motorized rifle brigade, an antiaircraft artillery division as well as a rifle brigade from the Moscow Defensive Zone.

As a consequence of the strategic-scale regroupings, the effective strength of the Don Front was also changed. A majority of the new formations (three rifle divisions, two artillery divisions and two antiaircraft artillery divisions) arrived in it from the RVGK. Only one rifle division was shifted from the Stalingrad Front and one fortified area from the Moscow Defensive Zone. From the Don Front four rifle divisions were withdrawn to the RVGK; the III Guards Cavalry Corps (two cavalry divisions), three rifle divisions and a tank brigade were shifted to the Southwestern Front; the VII Tank Corps (three tank brigades and a motorized rifle brigade) were turned over to the Volga Military District for bringing up to strength.⁽¹³⁾ Due to these regroupings as well as to the deconstituting and reconstituting of a number of formations, the effective strength of the Don Front by the start of the 1942-1943 winter campaign had been reduced by 11 rifle divisions and three cavalry divisions, two fighter brigades, ten tank brigades and a motorized rifle brigade. At the same time, it had been increased by two fortified areas, two artillery divisions and two antiaircraft artillery divisions.

The strategic troop movements significantly renewed the effective strength of the Stalingrad Front which in the course of the counteroffensive on the southwestern sector was to launch a strike in the aim of encircling a large enemy grouping from the south. Over a period of 2 months, the front received from the RVGK the VII Rifle Corps (three brigades) and the IV Cavalry Corps (two divisions), four rifle divisions (two each from the 4th and 10th Reserve Armies) and an artillery division, a tank brigade and two pontoon bridge brigades. Arriving from the Volga Military District were the IV Mechanized Corps (three brigades), a tank brigade, two mechanized brigades and a rifle brigade. A tank brigade, an antiaircraft artillery division and a fortified area were shifted from the other strategic sector (from the Moscow Defensive Zone and the Moscow Military District).

During this same time, withdrawn from the effective strength of the Stalingrad Front were the following formations for movement: a rifle division to the Don Front; a fighter air division to the Southwestern Front; the II Tank Corps (three tank brigades) and the XXIII Tank Corps (a motorized rifle brigade) and four separate tank brigades for the Volga Military District; a rifle division and a motorized rifle brigade to the RVGK; three rifle divisions for the Moscow Defensive Zone. By December the effective strength of the front had declined, in comparison with 1 December, by two TOE rifle divisions, an air division, and seven brigades of

armored and mechanized troops, while at the same time it had been enlarged by a cavalry division, an artillery division and an antiaircraft artillery division, and two brigades of engineer troops.

The regroupings on the southwestern strategic sector and the moves to it from the western sector over the 2 months involved 134 divisions and brigades from the various combat arms and aviation. On 1 October this was approximately 57 percent of the formations in the Voronezh, Don and Stalingrad Fronts. During the period of preparing for the campaign, 24 divisions and brigades arrived at this sector from the western sector, while only 3 such formations left for there. In addition, a tank regiment and around 20 artillery and mortar regiments arrived to reinforce the 3 fronts preparing to go over to the counteroffensive.⁽¹⁴⁾ The basic portion of draft recruits, over 105,000 men, was received by the southwestern sector.

As a result of the strategic moves and other changes, the Soviet troop grouping on the southwestern sector by the start of the campaign had increased by 2 rifle divisions, 5 rifle brigades, a fortified area, a cavalry division, 5 artillery divisions and 5 antiaircraft artillery divisions, 12 mechanized brigades, 7 engineer brigades and an air division. At the same time, it had declined by a fighter brigade, 17 tank brigades and 2 motorized rifle brigades.

The Transcaucasian Front in October-November was reinforced with troops from the RVGK. From here it received six headquarters of rifle corps and one headquarters of a cavalry corps as well as three rifle divisions, two rifle brigades and two combat engineer brigades. Only one tank brigade arrived on the front from the Soviet troops in Iran. Regardless of the fact that over a period of 2 months, the Transcaucasian Front carried out strategic regroupings and the formations which had lost their battleworthiness were deconstituted, its size did not substantially change. The front received over 47,000 men of draft reinforcements.

As a whole, in preparing the 1942-1943 winter campaign, the Soviet Supreme High Command regrouped 226 divisions and brigades of various combat arms and aviation. Out of the total number of regrouped formations, 93 were rifle and motorized rifle, 72 were tank and mechanized, 27 were air, 14 were artillery, 11 were engineer, 7 were cavalry and 2 were fortified area. Some 191 formations were shifted within the boundaries of their strategic sector, and 35 from one sector to another. The troop movements on the western and southwestern sectors were marked by the highest intensity and these were almost 87 percent of all the strategic regroupings over the 2-3 month period. Changes in the effective troop strength on the southwestern sector (the Voronezh, Don, Southwestern and Stalingrad Fronts) were over one-half of all the strategic-scale troop movements. Since the main thrust was being readied here in the campaign,

the fronts of this sector received 77 divisions and brigades due to the movements and almost one out of every three formations came from the western strategic sector.

A characteristic feature of the Soviet troop regroupings carried out in the autumn of 1942 was the shifting of the formations from the given sector to the one located further south (with the exception of the Caucasus). Two rifle divisions arrived from the northern sector of the Soviet-German Front in the northwestern sector; four rifle divisions from the northwestern to the western and a rifle brigade to the southwestern (the Volga Military District); seven rifle divisions, two rifle brigades, two motorized rifle brigades, three mechanized rifle brigades and eight tank brigades, a fortified area and an anti-aircraft artillery division came from the western sector to the southwestern. At this time there were virtually no regroupings in the other direction, from south to north: just three rifle divisions (196th, 229th and 244th) were removed from the Stalingrad Front and shifted to the Moscow Defensive Zone for bringing up to strength.

The 68 divisions and brigades involved in the strategic regroupings were turned over to the fronts from the RVGK with the Kalinin, Southwestern and Stalingrad Fronts receiving the greatest reinforcements: respectively 14, 12 and 13 of these formations. Out of their total number, over one-half went to the southwestern sector, where the main thrust was being readied, and almost one-third to the western sector where as before a rather large Soviet troop grouping was positioned. Some 38 formations were withdrawn from the fronts to the RVGK and the largest number of them from the southwestern (21) and northwestern (10) sectors. Consequently, the troop movements involved with the transfer of them from the RVGK to the operational army and vice versa from the fronts to the reserve, during the given period comprised almost one-half of the strategic-scale regroupings.

The scope of these regroupings was caused by the skillful positioning of the reserve armies a portion of which had been positioned in the rear of the operational fronts, within the limits of one or another strategic sector. For example, due to the fact that the second reserve army was in the area of Cherepovets, Vologda, the troops could enter it by the shortest routes from the fronts of the northwestern sector. Similar goals were achieved by the positioning of the 10th Reserve Army on the southwestern sector in the area of Krasnyy Yar, Kamyshin, and the 1st Reserve Army on the western sector near Tula. Another portion of the reserve armies was positioned on the boundary of the strategic sectors (the 3d Army behind the Northwestern and Kalinin Fronts in the area of Vyshniy Volochik, Kalinin; the 4th Army behind the Voronezh Front in the area of Rtishchevo). This made it possible for the formations and units which had been brought up to strength and reconstituted to have an active influence on the situation developing on two sectors.

A third part of the total number of regrouped divisions and brigades was moved as part of the corps. For example, the IV and VI Guards Rifle Corps were moved from the strategic reserve to the Southwestern Front with a strength of three rifle divisions each, while the VI Rifle Corps which included a rifle division and four brigades was moved to the Kalinin Front from the Moscow Military District. The tank and mechanized corps were more often moved in full strength. Frequently Hq SHC shifted only the headquarters of the rifle corps together with a group of corps units. For example, Headquarters shifted from its reserve the headquarters of the XIV Rifle Corps to the Southwestern Front and put the headquarters of four (I, IV, V and VII) guards rifle corps under its own subordination from the Volkhov, Northwestern and Western Fronts. In the Caucasus, where it was extremely difficult to maneuver the troops, more often than on the other sectors of the Soviet-German Front, they moved the corps headquarters. Thus, in October-November the Transcaucasian Front received from the strategic reserves the headquarters of six rifle corps and one cavalry corps and this helped to increase the level of leadership over the formations comprising it and fighting on separate mountain sectors.

The operational field forces of the Soviet troops at this time were not shifted from one sector of the front to another. An exception was the 5th Tank Army which upon instructions of Hq SHC was shifted from the Bryansk Front to the Southwestern(15) in a strength of two tank corps (in one of these there was just one tank brigade), three rifle divisions and a separate tank brigade. The move of these forces was made by rail (starting on 20 October) and then under their own power. Having made a 120-km march from the railhead, the army by 6 November was concentrated on the left bank of the Don(16) in the area of Serafimovich. By the start of the counteroffensive, it had been reinforced with two tank brigades and a motorized rifle brigade shifted from the Moscow Military District, by two rifle divisions transferred from the 40th Army of the Voronezh Front and the 24th Army of the Don Front and the just constituted anti-aircraft artillery division from the RVGK.

As a result of the strategic regroupings, the troops in the operational army began to be allocated by sectors of the Soviet-German Front as shown in the table. Such a distribution of the forces made it possible to achieve superiority over the enemy on the Stalingrad sector and begin offensive actions in the center and on the northern wing of the Soviet-German Front without complicated preliminary operational-strategic regroupings as the execution of these, moreover, would have been extremely difficult, as the enemy had cut a majority of the lateral lines of communications.

The troops received by the fronts during the preparatory stage of the 1942-1943 campaign as a result of the strategic regroupings were assigned, as a rule, for establishing assault groupings on the main sectors.

Distribution of Forces in Operational Army by Sectors of Strategic Front
on 19 November 1942¹⁷

Sectors of Strategic Front	Fronts, Armies	Length of Sector, km	Amount of Forces*			
			Human, men	Guns, mortars, pieces	Tanks	Aircraft
From Barents Sea to Lake Ladoga	Karelian, 7th Separate Army	1,550	340	3,931	220	177
From Lake Ladoga to Kholm	Leningrad, Volkhov, North-western	1,160	1,232	16,435	1,089	277
From Kholm to Bolkhov	Kalinin, Western Moscow Defensive Zone	1,050	1,890	24,682	3,375	1,170
From Bolkhov to Novaya Kalitva	Bryansk, Voronezh	550	644	7,834	884	225
From Novaya Kalitva to Astrakhan	Southwestern, Don, Stalingrad	850	1,103	15,501	1,463	928
In Northern Caucasus	Transcaucasian	1,000	816	8,797	319	255

* Not counting National Air Defense Troops and Navy as well as antiaircraft guns and 50-mm mortars. Aviation data as of 1 November 1942 (without long-range aviation).

Distribution of Forces in Operational Army by Sectors of Strategic Front on 19 November 1942(17)

* Not counting National Air Defense Troops and Navy as well as antiaircraft guns and 50-mm mortars. Aviation data as of 1 November 1942 (without long-range aviation).

In a majority of instances, rail transport was used for the troop movements and only sometimes motor vehicle and aviation. Frequently the troops moved under their own power, particularly in regroupings between adjacent fronts and in moving up from the front military districts as part of the operational army. Here the formations carried out a march of 300-400 km.

In order to raise the transport support for the strategic regroupings to a higher level, Hq SHC undertook the necessary measures. In August, for example, the 136-km railroad line of Petrov Val—Ilovlya was built and put into operation, and in September under enemy fire the Akhtubá—Paromnaya line of the same length. They both played an important role in preparing for the counteroffensive. In October, 1.5-fold more freight cars and flatcars reached the Stalingrad area carrying operational and supply freight than in September, while in November, the amount reached 41,461.(19)

The low capacity of the railroads reduced the speed of train traffic. For example, seven formations arrived 2-7 days behind the planned date at the fronts of the southwestern sector, and this was one of the main reasons for the shifting of the counteroffensive from 10 to 19 November. At the same time, certain formations moved quickly. Thus, the 35th Guards Rifle Division was moved from the Moscow Military District by rail to Saratov Oblast during the period from 14 through 18 October;(20) then it became part of the Southwestern Front.

The covert movement of troops was a decisive condition for successfully carrying out the strategic regroupings. For example, in the dispatching of the trains carrying personnel and equipment of the 5th Tank Army, even their superiors did not know the destination. After unloading, the concentrating of the units in the areas assigned to them was carried out solely at night. As a result, the enemy did not detect the main forces of the army and the commitment of a large number of tanks on the Stalingrad sector was unexpected for it.

The effectiveness of the measures to conceal the strategic regroupings can be seen from the fact that the Nazi Command in the autumn of 1942 sent the basic mass of reserves to reinforce Army Group Center. In October alone, the latter received the headquarters of an army corps and eight divisions, seven of which had arrived from Germany. At the same time, Army Group B aimed at Stalingrad received almost one-half the amount of these forces.(21)

In reflecting on Soviet military art at the end of the first period of the war, MSU G.K. Zhukov has written: "...The Soviet Armed Forces learned to keep their intentions a deep secret, to carry out disinformation widely and mislead the enemy. The covert regroupings and concentrations of the troops made it possible to launch surprise attacks against the enemy."(22)

The strategic regroupings were carried out under the directives of Hq SHC or the General Staff and these designated the loading, unloading and concentration

areas, the speed of movement, the times for the beginning and end of the movements and the support measures. The Military Railroads (VOSO) Directorate planned all types of movements on the basis of monthly limits. According to plans worked out by the Main Directorate for the Constituting and Manning of the Troops, the formations and units in the new areas received the lacking personnel and weapons, while ammunition, fuel, food, fodder and clothing were obtained under the plans of the Main Artillery Directorate and the chief of the Soviet Army Rear Services. The troops were covered by aviation during the move and unloading. The plans for the combat employment of aviation were worked out under orders of the commander of the Soviet Army Air Forces.

The brilliantly executed counteroffensive at Stalingrad which ended with the encirclement and destruction of the large enemy grouping demonstrated the advisability of the regrouping of the armed forces carried out during the period of preparing for the 1942-1943 winter campaign. This convincingly showed the increased level of strategic leadership of the Soviet Supreme High Command and the superiority of Soviet military art over the aggressor's military art.

Footnotes

1. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 6, 1976, p 23.
2. "Istoriya voyennogo iskusstva: Uchebnik dlya voyennykh akademi Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil" [History of Military Art: Textbook for Military Academies of the Soviet Armed Forces], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1984, p 174.
3. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 500, inv. 12484, file 465.
4. Ibid., folio 342, inv. 5440, file 16, sheet 420.
5. Ibid., folio 362, inv. 20273, file 1, sheet 235.
6. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 7, 1979, pp 157, 351-352.
7. Ibid., Vol 6, 1978, pp 534-535.
8. A.M. Samsonov, "Stalingradskaia bitva" [The Battle of Stalingrad], Moscow, Nauka, 1982, p 536.
9. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya," Vol 5, 1978, p 52.
10. Ibid., Vol 7, p 683.

11. "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna. Entsiklopediya" [The Great Patriotic War. An Encyclopedia], Moscow, Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, 1985, p 821.

12. "17-ya vozdushnaya armiia v boyakh ot Stalingrada do Veny" [The 17th Air Army in Fighting From Stalingrad to Vienna], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, p 5.

13. V.P. Bogachev, "Gvardeyskiy Kotelnikovskiy" [The Guards Kotelnikovskiy], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1981, p 35.

14. A.M. Samsonov, op. cit., p 343.

15. TsAMO, folio 331, inv. 9760, file 3, sheets 1-3.

16. Ibid., inv. 5041, file 20, sheet 6.

17. Compiled from: "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy..." Vol 6, p 41.

18. [Not in text]

19. "Velikaya pobeda na Volge" [The Great Victory on the Volga], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1965, pp 225-227.

20. N.I. Afanasyev, "Ot Volgi do Shpreye: Boyevoy put 35-y gvardeyskoy Lozovskoy, Krasnoznamennoy, ordenov Suvorova i Bogdana Khmel'nitskogo divizii" [From the Volga to the Spree: The Campaign Record of the 35th Lozovskiy, Red Banner, Orders of Suvorov and Bogdan Khmel'nitskiy Guards Division], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1982, p 80.

21. "Sbornik materialov po sostavu, gruppirovke i peregruppirovke sukhoputnykh voysk fashistskoy Germanii i voysk byvshikh yeye satellitov na sovetsko-germanskoy fronte za period 1941-1945 gg." [Collection of Materials on the Strength, Grouping and Regrouping of the Ground Troops of Nazi Germany and the Troops of Its Former Satellites on the Soviet-German Front Over the Period of 1941- 1945], Moscow, No 2, 1956, pp 130-135.

22. G.K. Zhukov, "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Remembrances and Reflections], Moscow, Izd-vo APN, 7th Edition, Vol 2, 1986, p 291.

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Raid to Tatsinskaya

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23 Oct 87) pp 63-71

[Article by Maj Gen E.V. Porfiryev (posthumous), chief of staff of the Southern Troop Group: "The Raid to Tatsinskaya"]

[Text] One of the vivid pages in the battle chronicle of the tank troops was the raid by the XXIV Tank Corps (1) into the enemy rear in December 1942. The current article is devoted to this.

At the beginning of winter of the second year of the war, the most important task confronting the Southwestern Front was to prevent the main enemy forces from linking up with the surrounded Stalingrad grouping and to eliminate this grouping. In this context the front's commander, Col Gen N.F. Vatutin, decided to launch the main thrust with the forces of the 1st Guards Army (commander, Lt Gen V.N. Kuznetsov) and the 3d Guards Army (commander, Lt Gen D.D. Lelyushenko) along converging axes at Tatsinskaya, Morozovskiy in the aim of surrounding and destroying the main forces of the 8th Italian Army and Operations Group Hollidt with an auxiliary thrust on the axis of Morozovskiy, Tatsinskaya with the forces of the 5th Tank Army.(2)

For conducting the operation during the first days of December, the front was reinforced with two rifle corps and three tank corps as well as a large number of separate units. All the tank corps, the XVIII, XXIV, XXV and XVII, were included by the front's commander in the 1st Guards Army. In accord with the operation's plan, the XVIII Tank Corps (commander, Maj Gen Tank Trps B.S. Bakharov) and the XXV Tank Corps (commander, Maj Gen Tank Trps P.P. Pavlov) were to be committed to battle on the first day of the offensive with the task of completing the breakthrough of the enemy defenses together with the infantry, while by the end of the second day of the operation, in cooperation with the troops of the 3d Guards Army, they were to surround the main forces of the 8th Italian Army and advance to the southeast. The XVII Tank Corps (commander, Maj Gen Tank Trps P.P. Poluboyarov) was to advance on the axis of Kantemirovka, Voloshino. The XXIV Tank Corps of Maj Gen Tank Trps V.M. Badanov was to be committed to the breach after the crossing of the enemy defenses directly behind the XVIII and XXV Tank Corps for exploiting the success on the general axis of Tatsinskaya.

During the first 5 days of December, preparations for the forthcoming operation were commenced on the staff of the front, on the staff of the armies and formations and in the troops. The command of the XXIV Tank Corps and its staff headed by Col A.S. Burdeynyy also began planning the offensive and organizing the combat training of the formations and units. During this period the

corps included the 4th Guards Tank Brigade (commander, Col G.I. Kopylov), the 54th Tank Brigade (commander, Col V.M. Polyakov) and the 130th (commander, Lt Col S.K. Nesterov) and the 24th Motorized Rifle Brigade (commander, Col V.L. Savchenko), the 13th Mining Engineer Company and the 156th Mobile Repair Base. For carrying out the set task, the corps was reinforced with the 658th Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment and the 413th Separate Guards Mortar [Rocket] Battalion.(3)

Each tank brigade consisted of two tank battalions and one motorized rifle battalion, an antitank artillery battery and headquarters company. The motorized rifle brigade included three motorized rifle battalions, an artillery and antiaircraft artillery battalion, a mortar battery and a headquarters company. The strength of the corps in terms of tanks was almost 90 percent of the TOE, for motor transport 50 percent and personnel 70 percent.

The commander of the formation, Maj Gen Tank Trps V.M. Badanov decided to commit it to the breach from the Osetrovo bridgehead in the zone of the IV Guards Rifle Corps after the breaching of the tactical defensive zone behind the XXV Tank Corps, by the end of the 1st day of the operation to reach the area of Tverdokhlebovo, Lofitskoye, by the end of the 2d day to advance to Degtevo, by the end of the 3d day to approach Ilinka and by the end of the 4th day to capture the area of Tatsinskaya, Apanaskino.(4)

The 130th and 4th Guards Tank Brigades were to advance in the first echelon of the corps, while the 54th Tank Brigade and the 24th Motorized Rifle Brigade were to advance in the second. The 130th Tank Brigade had the task, after being committed to battle, to advance on the axis of Mankovo—Kalitvenskaya and, in supporting the right flank of the corps, to prevent the enemy's retreat to the south and southeast. By the evening of 19 December, in cooperation with the 54th Tank Brigade, it was to take Mankovo—Kalitvenskaya without a pause and continue the offensive on the Degtevo axis. The 4th Guards Tank Brigade, in advancing on Kuteynikov, was to prevent the enemy's retreat to the south and southeast and support the left flank of the corps. At the end of the day of 19 December, by an assault without a pause, it was to drive the enemy out of Kuteynikovo and then advance toward the population point of Degtevo. The 54th Tank Brigade, in advancing behind the 130th Tank Brigade along the route of Tverdokhlebovo, Maryevka, Novo-Stepanovskiy, was to be constantly ready in cooperation with the 130th Tank Brigade to capture Mankovo—Kalitvenskaya. The 24th Motorized Rifle Brigade received orders to advance behind the 4th Guards Tank Brigade along the route of Maryevka, Novo-Stepanovskiy, to reach the line of Mankovo—Kalitvenskaya and to be ready to act according to the developing situation.

The corps was to move up to the forming-up place and be committed to the breach along two routes. The 130th

and 54th Tank Brigades were to follow the first route and the 4th Guards and 24th Motorized Rifle Brigades were to follow the second.

The enemy was to be pursued along two independent routes chosen in such a manner that in the course of the offensive it would be possible, if necessary, to maneuver quickly and deploy the brigades into battle formation.

In moving up to the forming-up place, the corps was to cross the Don at two sectors. In the area of Verkhniy Mamon over bridges erected by the combat engineer battalions under the army, the corps commander decided to move across the 130th and 54th Tank Brigades, while the 4th Guards Tank and 24th Motorized Rifle Brigades would cross at the sector in the area of Nizhniy Mamon. To avoid the grouping up of the troops, the second echelon formations were to cross 3 hours after the crossing of the first echelon brigades.

In the course of organizing artillery support for the commitment, the command and the officers of the staffs of the corps and brigades ahead of time clarified the boundaries of the commitment sector and set the signals for calling in and ceasing fire both by radio and with the aid of signal rockets. For correcting artillery fire they appointed artillery officers who were responsible for correcting the fire from radio-equipped tanks.

Air support was entrusted to the III Composite Air Corps of the 17th Air Army (commander, Maj Gen Avn S.A. Krasovskiy). The tasks for the aviation to support the formations of the XXIV Tank Corps were set by the air army commander, having coordinated these with the commander of the 1st Guards Army and the corps commander.

An officer from the staff of the III Composite Air Corps was assigned to the staff of the XXIV Tank Corps with his own communications and code table. General signals of target designation and identification were set for reciprocal identification of the units of the tank formation and aviation. In the corps formations down to the company, inclusively, the tank troops prepared ground capes, sheets, lights and white, red and green rockets for signaling the aviation.(5)

For organizing engineer support, the combat engineer subunits from the XXIV Tank Corps and the rifle troop subunits involved in carrying out engineer tasks from the IV Guards Rifle Corps equipped the assembly and forming-up areas and also cleared and repaired the routes.

In preparing for the offensive, the commander of the 1st Guards Army and the commander of the XXIV Tank Corps gave special attention to the questions of cooperation. The commander conducts two exercises with the corps commanders on the questions of organizing cooperation between the rifle and tank corps, the artillery and aviation.(6) while the commander of the XXIV Tank

Corps conducted a series of exercises with the brigade commanders and staff officers to work out the questions of cooperation between the units. In addition, the formation made six trips for reconnoitering the Osetrovo bridgehead and from which the corps was to be committed to battle. Two exercises were conducted using maps on the question "The Commitment of the Tank Corps to the Breach" and here they worked through the questions of the joint actions of the corps formations and units, the rifle divisions of the IV Guards Rifle Corps and the artillery.

During the preparatory period, great importance was given to organizing troop control. For the period when the corps was moving up to the forming-up place for the offensive and for the commitment to battle, for controlling its troops they set up an observation post for the formation commander and this was positioned next to the command post of the commander of the IV Guards Rifle Corps.(7) At the observation post were the corps commander, the chiefs of the operations and intelligence sections and the air representative. The corps command post at this time remained in the assembly area. The corps chief of staff with staff officers were to remain at it.

Communications of the corps observation and command posts with the brigades and the command posts of the 1st Guards Army and the IV Guards Rifle Corps in preparing for the offensive was provided by wire and mobile communications facilities. In the course of the fighting in the operational depth, control of the corps formations and units was planned to employ radio and mobile facilities from the command post of the corps commander and from the position of the operations group which was to move up behind the first echelon brigades. The brigade commanders were to control the units and subunits by radio from commander combat vehicles.

Radio troop control on the corps—army and corps—brigade levels was to be carried out employing coded procedure charts, while on the brigade—battalion and lower levels, in open text. Contact with the commander of the Southwestern Front was to be maintained by a special radio assigned to the corps by the front's staff. In the event of the development of a great gap between the corps and the front staff, contact between them was to be maintained via intermediate radios.(8)

We should also note the experience of settling the questions of battle support for the actions of the formation. Thus, in preparing for the offensive, the intelligence data about the enemy and which had been received by the corps staff from the staff of the 1st Guards Army and from the first echelon rifle formations, the XVIII and XXV Tank Corps, were constantly verified through different intelligence channels.(9) With the start of hostilities, the XXV Tank Corps was to send out reconnaissance groups from the 130th and 4th Guards Tank Brigades consisting of reconnaissance platoons reinforced with one or two T-34 tanks and one or two T-70

tanks. They were to be directly in the battle formations of the units of the XXV Tank Corps with the task of promptly establishing the direction of the enemy's retreat.(10)

When the XXIV Tank Corps was fighting in the operational depth, the plan was to conduct reconnaissance of the enemy by reconnaissance groups which had been sent out. They also planned to receive intelligence data from aviation and the staff of the XXV Tank Corps.

Air defense for the XXIV Tank Corps in the assembly and forming-up areas was planned for the forces of the 658th Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment which had been assigned to the corps as well as the TOE antiaircraft artillery battalion which was part of the 24th Motorized Rifle Brigade.(11) The corps commander had planned to employ these antiaircraft weapons for covering the troops and in the course of the raid into the enemy rear.

During the period of preparing for the offensive, the army dumps supplied the transportable stocks of ammunition, fuels, lubricants and food. By the start of the operation, the corps had two units of fire of all types of ammunition, two loads of fuel and lubricants and five daily rations of food. The organizing of technical support for the corps held an important place in the work of the rear services.

The main task for party political work carried out in the formation in preparing for the offensive was to focus the soldiers and officers on fighting under unusual conditions, that is, deep in the enemy rear a significant distance away from the main forces of the 1st Guards Army and at preparing the equipment to operate under the conditions of protracted pursuit of the enemy. The political workers strengthened the company (battery) party and Komsomol organizations and held party and Komsomol meetings.

The offensive of the 1st Guards Army commenced, as planned, at 0930 hours on 16 December, after an hour and a half of artillery softening up. By 1100 hours, the rifle formations, regardless of the fierce enemy resistance, had pushed 1.5-2 km into the enemy defenses but had not advanced farther. In order to accelerate the breaching of the main defensive zone, the army commander committed the XVIII and XXV Tank Corps to battle. At dawn of 17 December, enemy resistance was shattered and both tank formations rushed into the operational depth.

The XXIV Tank Corps at 1130 hours on 17 December, upon instructions of the army commander, began to cross the Don in the areas of Verkhniy and Nizhniy Mamon. By 1830 hours, the units of the formation had crossed to the opposite bank of the river and had begun to carry out the previously assigned battle tasks.

The commitment to battle was carried out in accord with the decision of the corps commander behind the XXV Tank Corps following the two routes.

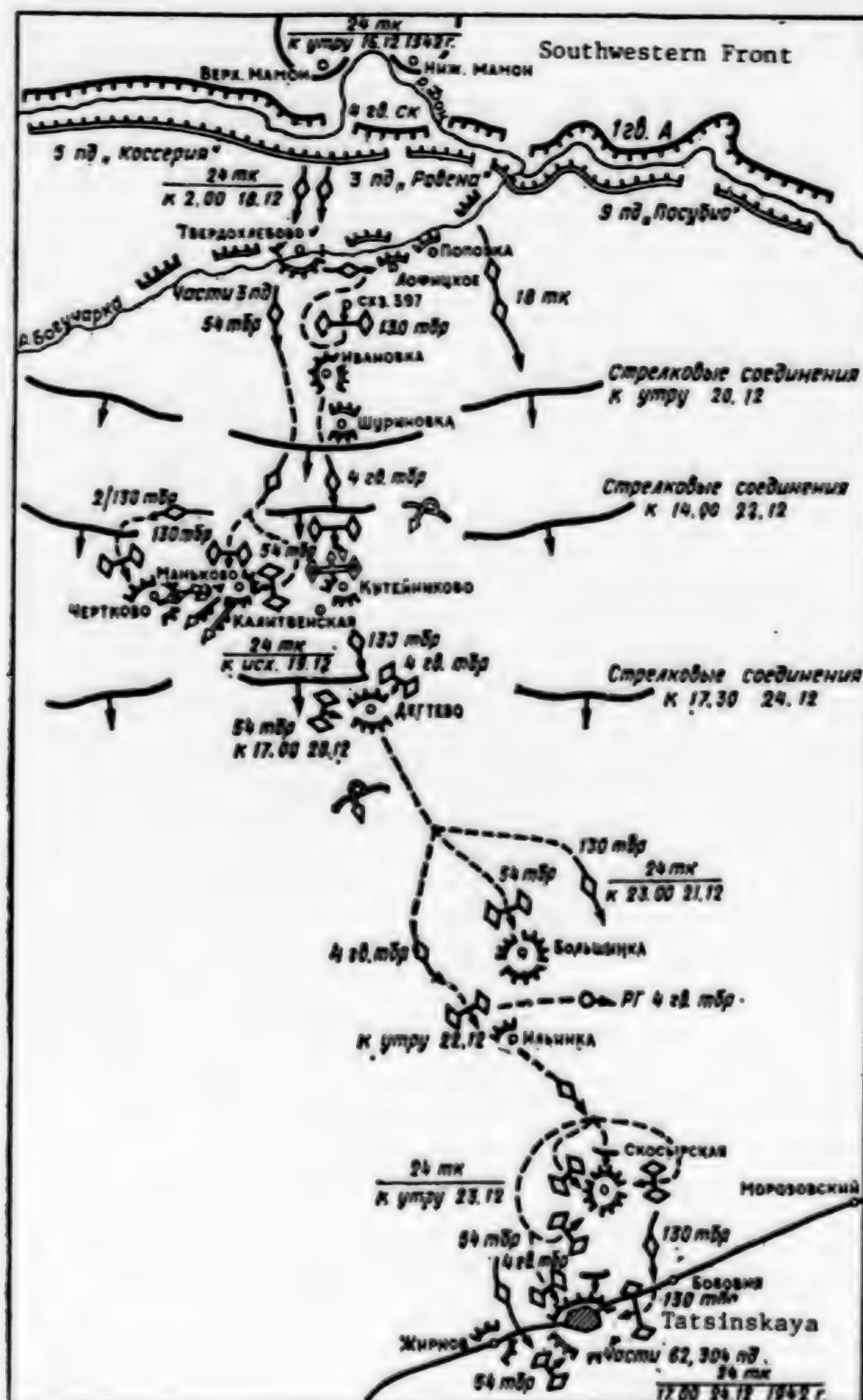
For conducting reconnaissance, the brigades of the first echelon sent out reconnaissance patrols consisting of two or three tanks with motorized infantry and forward detachments were assigned consisting of a company of T-34 tanks with a mounted party and an attached combat engineer platoon. The forward detachment of the 130th Tank Brigade was reinforced with a mortar battery from the 24th Motorized Rifle Brigade. Each tank brigade of the first echelon sent out toward the exposed flanks battle security comprised of one-three T-34 tanks and up to two T-70 tanks with mounted infantry.

In advancing behind the XXV Tank Corps, the XXIV Tank Corps by 0200 hours on 18 December had reached the area of Tverdokhlebovo, conducting reconnaissance of the enemy simultaneously in the area of the population points of Raskovka, Lofitskoye, Popovka. The reconnaissance groups set out in the direction of Lofitskoye and Popovka acted successfully. Reconnaissance of Raskovka was unsuccessful as the reconnaissance groups sent out here twice came under fire, suffered losses and were unable to secure any data.

Under these conditions, Gen V.M. Badanov decided not to engage the Nazis in Raskovka in battle but rather to assault the strongpoints of Lofitskoye and Popovka. This task was entrusted to the 4th Guards and 130th Tank Brigades. By a surprise attack the tank troops drove the enemy out of these population points and, continuing the offensive, in the second half of the day of 18 December, cut the escape route of the Boguchar enemy grouping on the axis of Sovkhoz No. 397, Taly.(12) Good conditions were created for pursuing the Nazis.

The corps commander ordered the 130th and 4th Guards Tank Brigades, in pursuing the enemy, by the end of the day of 19 December, to capture Mankovo—Kalitvinskaya, to take the important road junction of Degtevo and cut off the Nazis' escape route to Millerovo. The 130th Tank Brigade was also given the task: upon reaching the line of Bakay, Kadamov with a portion of the forces to pursue the enemy in the direction of Chertkovo and to attack it in this population point from the northwest.

In outflanking Sovkhoz No. 397 to the north, the units of the 130th Tank Brigade by 1900 hours on 18 December had come out in the rear of the Nazis defending it and by a surprise assault from the front and rear captured this strongpoint. In the course of the fighting, fuel dumps were captured and enemy soldiers and officers were taken prisoner. By 2000 hours, the brigade had advanced 25 km and without a pause captured the enemy strongpoint of Maryevka. The corps was able to pursue the enemy in the direction of Mankovo—Kalitvinskaya. In fighting its way more than 40 km during the night, in the



Raid of XXIV Tank Corps in Course of Operation on Middle Don (December 1942)

morning of 19 December, the forward detachment of the 130th Tank Brigade reached this large village. Reconnaissance had established that a strong enemy garrison was in it. The corps commander decided to capture the strongpoint without a pause using the forces of the 130th Tank Brigade and the 54th Tank Brigade which had been moved up from the second echelon.

The 1st and 3d Battalions of the 130th Tank Brigade, upon orders from the formation's commander, Lt Col K.S. Nesterov, at a high speed approached the northern outskirts of Mankovo—Kalitvinskaya and immediately opened fire against the enemy. At the same time, units of the 54th Tank Brigade of Col V.M. Polyakov, in outflanking the village from the east and southeast, by a rapid assault broke into Mankovo—Kalitvinskaya, cutting off the escape route for the Nazis. The garrison was completely crushed. The tank troops captured 300 motor vehicles in operating order and these Gen V.M. Badanov ordered to be turned over basically to the 24th Motorized Rifle Brigade of Col V.L. Savchenko.

The 2d Battalion of the 130th Tank Brigade in the period of fighting for Mankovo—Kalitvinskaya, was to capture Chertkovo Station but, in encountering organized enemy resistance, went over to the defensive. Having engaged the Nazis in battle, it deprived them of the opportunity to help the garrison in Mankovo—Kalitvinskaya.

The 4th Guards Tank Brigade of Col G.I. Kopylov was given the task of skirting Raskovka and pursuing the enemy in the direction of Shurinovka, Kuteynikovo, supporting the actions of the 130th and 54th Tank Brigades to the east. By the evening of 18 December, the formation had crushed the enemy garrison in Shurinovka and after a short break for the personnel, for fueling the equipment and replenishing ammunition, advanced toward the village of Kuteynikovo.

At 1100 hours on 19 December, the tank troops of the brigade without a pause captured Kuteynikovo and completely defeated the enemy garrison stationed there. Here the enemy lost 417 soldiers and officers killed and wounded. The guardsmen lost 46 men. The brigade was ordered to dig in in the village and await instructions for a further offensive.

On 20 December, after refueling and replenishing ammunition, the corps continued to pursue the enemy. In the first echelon were the 4th Guards Tank Brigade and 54th Tank Brigade and in the second, the 130th Tank Brigade. The 24th Motorized Rifle Brigade of Gen V.M. Badanov remained in Mankovo—Kalitvinskaya to support the rear.

At dawn, the formations of the corps approached Degtevo. By 1700 hours on 20 December, by an attack of the 4th Guards Tank Brigade from the north and the 54th Tank Brigade from the west, the enemy was driven out of this population point. The important road junction leading to Millerovo and Tatsinskaya was in our hands.

In the 3 days of fighting, the corps had advanced 120 km and, reaching the line of Degtevo, Oktyabrskoye, was some 50-60 km ahead of the rifle formations. At about 2000 hours on 21 December, it had reached the population point of Bolshinka. Gen V.M. Badanov ordered the commanders of the 54th Tank Brigade, Col V.M. Polyakov, and the 130th Tank Brigade, Lt Col S.K. Nesterov, to move their formations across the surviving bridges over the Bolshaya River and, in outflanking Bolshinka to the north and northwest, by the end of 21 December, to capture this population point. The 4th Guards Tank Brigade of Col G.I. Kopylov was given the task of liberating Ilinka by the morning of 22 December.

Having crossed the water obstacle, the units of the 130th Tank Brigade destroyed the enemy battle outposts, broke into the northeastern outskirts of Bolshinka and engaged the Nazis. Not having data about the forces of the advancing troops, the enemy moved up its reserve opposite the 130th Tank Brigade. At this time the 54th Tank Brigade attacked the enemy from the northwest. By 2300 hours on 21 December, the village had been taken.(13)

The 4th Guards Tank Brigade by the end of the day of 21 December had approached Ilinka and after a brief nighttime battle took it. About 60 km remained to Tatsinskaya, but a heavily fortified Nazi strongpoint, Skosyrskaya, remained midway to the village.

In anticipating that the fighting for this population point would be difficult and protracted, Gen V.M. Badanov decided to take it by a night attack. The plan was to tie down the enemy with insignificant forces to the north, while the main forces of the two tank brigades would launch an attack against both flanks of the Nazi 27th Panzer Division which was on the defensive here. The carrying out of this task was entrusted to the 54th and 130th Tank Brigades and to the 1st Company of the 1st Rifle Battalion of the 24th Motorized Rifle Brigade.

The 4th Guards Tank Brigade from the corps second echelon was ordered to conduct reconnaissance for crossings over the Bystraya River at Maslov and Alifanov in the aim of the forthcoming crossing of the river, outflanking Skosyrskaya and reaching Tatsinskaya.

The fight for Skosyrskaya commenced on the night of 23 December. Here the tank troops fought boldly and decisively, destroying the enemy with their fire and tracks. The unit commanders widely maneuvered their subunits. By the morning of 23 December, enemy resistance had been broken. The remnants of its defeated subunits endeavored to escape toward Tatsinskaya, but they fell into an ambush and were destroyed. In this fighting the Nazis lost around 300 soldiers and officers, 10 guns, 15 tanks and 27 armored vehicles.

The path to Tatsinskaya was free. About 30 km remained to it, however fuel was running out and there was very little ammunition. Considering this, Gen V.M.

Badanov decided to leave a small garrison in Skosyrskaya with damaged equipment while the main forces of the corps were to prepare for the forthcoming fighting for Tatsinskaya which was defended by units of the enemy 62d and 304th Infantry Divisions.

The plan to capture the village, as worked out by the staff in accord with the decision of the corps commander, involved moving up the tank brigades to the forming-up positions during the night of 24 December and in the morning to launch an attack against the enemy simultaneously from three sides. The start of the general assault was set for 0730 hours after a volley of rocket fire and the signal of 555 by radio.

The 130th Tank Brigade was given the task of taking up the forming-up place by 0600 hours on 24 December for an advance some 4 km to the east of Tatsinskaya and upon the signal for the assault, to attack the enemy and capture the eastern outskirts of the village. The 4th Guards Tank Brigade was to reach the area of Mikhaylev, outflank Tatsinskaya to the northwest, by 0600 hours to be 4 km to the west of it and take up a forming-up place and be ready to attack the enemy from the west and northwest and then capture the western part of the village. The 1st Rifle Company of the 1st Rifle Battalion from the 24th Motorized Rifle Brigade with two artillery batteries from the formation's artillery regiment was ordered by 0600 hours to take up the forming-up place for an assault some 3 km to the north of Tatsinskaya. The 54th Tank Brigade (the reserve) was to be ready to advance behind the 4th Guards Tank Brigade. The 413th Separate Guards Mortar (Rocket) Battalion was given the task of taking up firing positions 4 km to the north of Tatsinskaya. The batteries of the 658th Artillery Regiment were assigned to the tank brigades. They were also to cover the formations from the air.

The main forces of the 24th Motorized Rifle Brigade were to move from Mankovo—Kalitvenskaya toward Tatsinskaya Village following the route of Volshinka, Ilinka, Skosyrskaya.

In carrying out the task set by the corps commander, during the night of 24 December, the brigades covertly moved up to the designated areas and took up their forming-up places awaiting the signal for the start of the assault. After the rocket volley at 0730 hours, the assault started. The thrust of the three brigades from different directions was a surprise for the Nazis. By 0800 hours, the 130th Tank Brigade had cut the Tatsinskaya, Morozovskiy Railroad and had captured the highway junction to the southeast of Tatsinskaya. At 0900 hours, the 1st and 2d Tank Battalions from the brigade broke into the airfield located to the south of the village, destroying enemy aircraft and flight personnel. The 3d Battalion attacked the railroad station and captured a train with new disassembled aircraft and a train carrying fuel. The 4th Guards Tank Brigade which advanced against Tatsinskaya from the northwest by 1100 hours, having

overcome stubborn enemy resistance, occupied the northern and northwestern outskirts of the village. The 54th Tank Brigade which had been committed to battle around the right flank of the 4th Guards Brigade captured the western part of Tatsinskaya, and then in cooperation with the units of the 130th Tank Brigade captured the southern outskirts of the village and reached the airfield.

During the day of 24 December, the tank troops had not only to fight the Tatsinskaya garrison but also repulse enemy counterattacks on the approaches to it and undertaken in the aim of driving the corps out of the village. However, all the attempts by the Nazis were in vain. By 1700 hours, the last centers of enemy resistance in Tatsinskaya had been suppressed. As a total as a result of the fighting for the village, some 3,500 Nazi officers and soldiers were lost, 50 guns, 15 tanks, and 73 motor vehicles; over 300 aircraft, 3 food depots and 5 ammunition dumps and 300 tons of gasoline were captured.(14)

During the following days the tank troops of the formation had to endure great hardships in the course of fighting the enemy troops which had surrounded Tatsinskaya. They courageously fought the enemy and, only after receiving permission from the command, did they abandon the village. During the night of 28 December, the units of the corps broke out of the ring of encirclement and linked up with the main forces of the front. During the 10 days of fighting, they had exterminated 11,292 enemy officers and soldiers and 4,769 men had been taken prisoner. The men of the corps destroyed 106 guns and hit and burned up 84 tanks.(15)

By its energetic actions the XXIV Tank Corps played an essential role in carrying out the task not only by the 1st Guards Army but also by the Southwestern Front as a whole. In the course of pursuing the enemy, it fought its way about 240 km and caused great losses to the enemy.

The capture of the Tatsinskaya airfield by the Soviet tank troops and the destruction of a large number of transport aircraft at it substantially complicated the supply of the Nazi troops surrounded at Stalingrad and accelerated their surrender.

The Soviet government had high regard for the feat of the tank corps troops. For the military courage, skill and valor shown by them, the XXIV Tank Corps on 26 December 1942 became the II Guards Tank Corps and was given the honorific designator of Tatsinskaya. Its commander, Gen V.M. Badanov, became the first holder in the nation of the Order of Suvorov 2d Degree. Many soldiers and officers from the formation were also awarded high governmental decorations. The title of Hero of the Soviet Union (posthumously) was awarded to the tank battalion commander, Capt M.Ye. Nechayev.

The experience of raid operations by a corps deep in the enemy rear has not lost its importance under present-day conditions. As before, high mobility, high maneuverability and the conduct of combat actions away from the main forces are still viable.

Footnotes

1. For combat accomplishments in the course of the Middle Don Operation, on 26 December 1942 the corps became the 2d Guards Tank Corps and received the honorific designator Tatsinskaya.

2. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 6, 1976, p 65; "Sovetskiye tankovyye voyska 1941-1945" [Soviet Tank Troops 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1973, p 86.

3. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 229, inv. 198712, file 4, sheet 160.

4. Ibid., inv. 590, file 26, sheet 17; folio 684, inv. 6850, file 58, sheet 2.

5. Ibid., folio 661, inv. 198712, file 4, sheet 156.

6. "Sbornik materialov po izucheniya opyta voyny" [Collection of Materials on Studying the Experience of the War], Moscow, Voenizdat, No 8, 1943, p 18.

7. TsAMO, folio 229, inv. 51351, file 2, sheet 7.

8. "Sbornik materialov po...", No 8, p 18.

9. TsAMO, folio 292, inv. 51351, file 2, sheet 3.

10. Ibid., folio 3107, inv. 1, file 6, sheets 62-63.

11. Ibid., folio 661, inv. 198712, file 4, sheet 156.

12. Ibid., folio 229, inv. 590, file 153, sheet 51.

13. Ibid., file 26, sheet 17.

14. Ibid., file 12, sheet 14; folio 661, inv. 198712, file 5, sheet 114.

15. Ibid., folio 661, inv. 198712, file 5, sheet 123.

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10272

Combat of 87th Rifle Division in Kotelnikovskiy Operation (15-31 December 1942)

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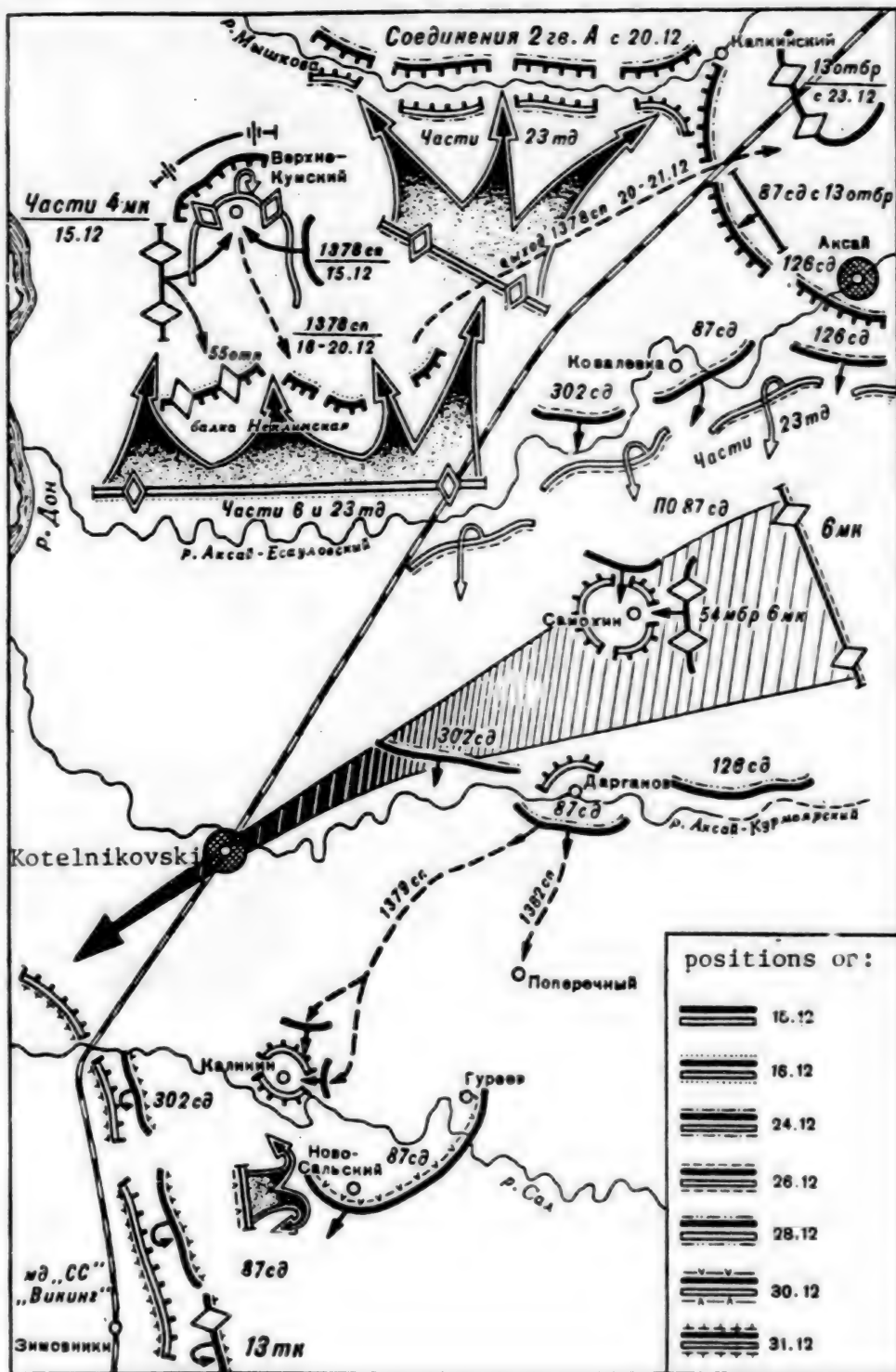
[Article by Lt Col V.A. Runov: "The Combat Actions of the 87th Rifle Division in the Kotelnikovskiy Operation (15-31 December 1942)"]

[Text] On 12 December 1942, the Nazi troops began their operation Winter Thunder in the aim of breaking the ring of encirclement of the Soviet troops and relieving the grouping of Col Gen F. von Paulus surrounded at Stalingrad. The assault force of Army Group Goth which had been given this task was the LVII German Panzer Corps which consisted of the 6th and 23d Panzer Divisions, the 16th Motorized Division and the 15th Airfield Division as well as units under corps subordination. It included a battalion of T-VI Tiger heavy tanks which had armor up to 100 mm thick and an 88-mm cannon.(1) Fighting at the point of the thrust was the 6th Panzer Division which had arrived from France on 12 November.

The enemy launched its main thrust in the border of the formations of the 51st Army and by the end of 13 December, having crossed the Aksay River and taken Verkhne-Kumskiy, had advanced to a depth of up to 50 km.(2) The situation on the given sector became critical and for this reason the Commander of the Stalingrad Front, Col Gen A.I. Yeremenko, reinforced the 51st Army with formations from his reserve, including the 87th Rifle Division.

The 87th Rifle Division (commander, Col A.I. Kazartsev) was shifted from the left bank of the Volga to an area to the west of Kapkin in order to prevent the advance of the enemy and together with the IV Mechanized Corps to defeat the units of the 6th Panzer Division in the area of Verkhne-Kumskiy. However, the division was unable to enter battle at full strength without a pause after the long march and was committed to battle piecemeal (see the diagram).

On 15 December, the subunits of the 1378th Rifle Regiment (commander, Lt Col M.S. Diasamidze), together with units from the IV Mechanized Corps, counterattacked the enemy in the area of Verkhne-Kumskiy. The enemy was defeated. Its losses were about 50 tanks, over 10 guns and several infantry battalions.(3) The remnants of the units of the 6th Panzer Division had been pushed 5-6 km to the south. However, the counter-attacking troops did not succeed in completely eliminating the enemy bridgehead on the right bank of the Aksay River, and subunits from the 1378th Rifle Regiment went over to the defensive. The Nazis hurriedly moved up reserves from in depth, including the 65th Separate Battalion of T-VI Tiger Tanks. From around the right flank of the 6th Panzer Division in the aim of broadening the bridgehead they led into battle the 23d Panzer



Combat Actions of 87th Rifle Division (15-31 December 1942)

Division with a portion of its forces fighting in the zone of the 87th Rifle Division.

In the first echelon of the defenses of the 87th Rifle Division was the 1378th Rifle Regiment reinforced by the 1st Battalion of the 1058th Artillery Regiment and the 3d Battalion of the 1379th Rifle Regiment which in turn was reinforced with a battery from the 448th Separate Antitank Battalion. The defenses of the subunits were of a focal sort and had been little prepared in engineer terms. Their forward edge ran along the slopes of the Neklinskiy Embankment.

A large portion of the forces had been put into the division's second echelon which had gone over to the defensive to the west of Kapkin, along the northern bank of the Myshkova River.(4) The defensive line along the Myshkov River was considered to be the main one. Here from the reserve of Headquarters they had moved up the 2d Guards Army of Lt Gen R.Ya. Malinovskiy which had been assigned to defeat the Kotelnikovskiy enemy grouping together with the 51st Army (commander, Maj Gen N.I. Trufanov). Support for their advance, deployment and going over to the offensive was entrusted to the IV Mechanized Corps and the 87th Rifle Division which for this purpose were temporarily put under the subordination of Lt Gen R.Ya. Malinovskiy.(5)

Over the 5 days of fighting, the personnel from the division's first echelon battalions successfully rebuffed around 30 assaults by superior enemy forces, showing high combat skill and mass heroism in this. At dawn of 18 December, the 24 men who remained alive from the 3d Battalion of the 1378th Rifle Regiment headed by the commander, Sr Lt P.N. Naumov, in defending elev. 137.2, engaged 80 enemy tanks. The score of destroyed tanks was opened by the political instructor S.A. Luzin and he was followed by B.S. Tarmayev. By 1200 hours, 18 enemy vehicles stood blackened in front of the battalion's defenses. There were over 300 destroyed Nazis. Only by evening at a price of great losses did the Nazis succeed in taking the elevation, all the defenders of which had fallen in a death of the brave. The regiment's 1st Rifle Battalion also repulsed the enemy assault down to the last man, retreating not a step.

In the second half of the day of 18 December, a telegram was delivered to Lt Col Diasamidze from the Supreme Commander-in-Chief: "I am proud of your stubborn fighting. Not a step back. The outstanding soldiers and commanders are to be submitted for a government decoration. I. Stalin."(6)

The artillery troops also fought heroically. In letting the enemy tanks come to within short range, they had a sure kill. Just the crew of Sgt M.A. Filchenko during 17 and 18 December destroyed 7 tanks and 3 armored personnel carriers. On the Berezovnyy Farm, 9 antitank gunners from the 448th Separate Antitank Battalion hit 13 enemy tanks.

On 19 December, in boosting their efforts, the Nazis on the flanks drove into the defenses of the subunits which for another 2 days continued fighting while encircled. During the night of 21 December, the remnants of the subunits from the 1378th Rifle Regiment broke through the enemy ring, reached the positions of the division's main forces and concentrated in the area of Zety for bringing up to strength with personnel and weapons and recovering battleworthiness. On the same day, the division was returned to the 51st Army. For another 3 days, the men of the formation repelled the last desperate attempts by the Nazis to push through a corridor with tank assaults to the surrounded von Paulus divisions. By the end of 23 December, the enemy's offensive capabilities were exhausted and it went over to the defensive.

During the night of 24 December, the 87th Rifle Division received the 13th Separate Tank Brigade which had 14 fighting vehicles. At 0600 hours, orders were received from the army commander to go over to the offensive with the task by 1000 hours of 25 December to reach a line of the Aksay River in the Kovalevka area. The assault was set for 1100 hours and it was to be preceded by a 30-minute artillery softening up. The division's battle formation was formed up in a single echelon with the assigning of the 3d Battalion of the 1379th Rifle Regiment as the reserve. The 1378th Rifle Regiment which had still not recovered its battleworthiness did not participate in the offensive. Within a short period of time, the division's staff had worked out an operational timetable, battle tasks had been given to the units and cooperation had been organized to a depth of 5-6 km.

After the artillery softening up, the division's units went over to the offensive behind the tanks. By 1630 hours, they had reached the designated line, by 1500 hours on the following day, having captured Kovalevka, they carried out the next task, advancing 13-14 km.(7) Subsequently, the rate of advance of the division declined due to the fact that the main forces of the enemy LVII Panzer Corps, having taken up the defensive on the left bank of the Aksay River, were putting up strong resistance. It was essential to pool the efforts of all the troops fighting on this sector.

The commander of the 51st Army reorganized the 302d, 87th and 126th Rifle Divisions into an operations group under the command of his deputy, Maj Gen S.F. Gorokhov. The 87th Rifle Division was given the task, in cooperation with units from the VI Mechanized Corps of Maj S.I. Bogdanov, from the morning of 26 December, to go over to the offensive and by the end of the day take Samokhin, and on the next, the 27th of December, Darganov, and reach the line of the Aksay-Kurmoyarskiy River. Subsequently, it was to advance on the axis of the Sal River. Over a period of 2 days, under conditions of 20-degree frost and a heavy snow cover, the unit was to advance 32 km and take two enemy strongpoints in the area of Samokhin and Darganov. The carrying out of this task would require from the troops high offensive drive and tenacity.

With the onset of darkness, reconnaissance was sent out to the southern bank of the Aksay River, and this established the insipient enemy retreat from the occupied line. Col Kazartsev ordered that a forward detachment, the 3d Battalion of the 1379th Regiment, be sent out in the direction of Samokhin, having reinforced the unit with several guns. By 1500 hours on 26 December, this detachment, without being spotted by the enemy, approached Samokhin from the north. At this time, the Nazis were fighting the 54th Mechanized Brigade of the tank corps which was advancing on the population point from the east. Having quickly assessed the situation, the commander of the 3d Rifle Battalion decided to attack the enemy without waiting for the approach of the main forces. The attack from the north caught the enemy by surprise. An hour later, Samokhin was in our hands. In this fighting the Nazis lost over 200 men. They fled, having abandoned 18 trucks and 40 trailers with food and military supplies.(8)

The division's regiments, advancing at the dawn of 26 December behind the forward detachments in a column along a single route, by the end of the day were concentrated in Samokhin. At 0100 hours of the night of 27 December, the forward detachment began the move against Darganov and by 0700 hours with a surprise attack, captured it, digging in on the southern bank of the Aksay-Kurmoyarskiy River.(9)

The division carried out the last task some 17 hours ahead of the designated time and the rate of advance to the line was almost 24 km a day.

From the achieved line the division went over to pursuing the enemy along two parallel routes. In front of the units were the vanguards, rifle battalions reinforced by artillery.

The regiments, in operating independently, maintained a high rate of advance. The enemy was unable to organize its defenses on none of the good lines. Nor did the aviation help stop the advancing Soviet troops. The enemy's retreat at times turned into a panic flight. Thus, the vanguard of the 1382d Rifle Regiment, in advancing along the first route, during the night of 28-29 December, by surprise broke into Poperechnyy and captured a ready-to-move column of 20 trucks carrying food and 10 passenger cars. During this time the vanguard of the 1379th Rifle Regiment, in advancing along the second route, by an assault in the enemy flank and rear destroyed the strongpoint in Kalinin. At dawn of 30 December, the vanguards had reached the Sal River, they had captured Novo-Salskiy and Gureyev and had dug in at the achieved lines awaiting the approach of the main forces. During the day in the area of Novo-Salskiy, the vanguard of the 1382d Rifle Regiment had to rebuff several counterattacks by the enemy which was endeavoring to eliminate the bridgeheads of the Soviet troops on the southern bank of the Sal River.

During 31 December, the division's units, in advancing to the southwest, pushed forward another 15 km and approached Zimornikiy which was defended by the SS Motorized Division Viking. There were not sufficient

forces for breaching the defensive line without a pause. In the regiments were just 160-200 effective bayonets per regiment, and there was a significant shortage of artillery and ammunition. The division, having successfully carried out the task set for it, was ordered to temporarily go over to the defensive on the designated lines.

In the course of the Kotelnikovskiy Operation, the command and the personnel of the 87th Rifle Division showed high fighting qualities. In the defensive battles, they steadfastly rebuffed the assaults of superior enemy forces, including the most battleworthy 6th Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht. In going over to the offensive without a pause, they conducted it at a rapid pace (averaging up to 17 km a day), continuously during the day and at night, using forward detachments as well as the actions of vanguards and various types of maneuvering.

The Soviet Command had high regard for the combat activities of the division. The Order of the Red Banner was awarded to the division's commander, Col A.I. Kazartsev, to his deputy commander for political affairs, Col T.N. Antonov, to the chief of the Operations Section, Maj V.N. Katilev, to the Deputy Commander of the 1378th Rifle Division for Political Affairs, Maj M.S. Sudorgin, and to the regiment's Chief of Staff, Capt G.F. Bykov. A large number of soldiers and commanders was awarded the Order of the Red Star and the medal For Valor. The commander of the 1378th Rifle Regiment, Lt Col M.S. Diasamidze, was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Footnotes

1. S.M. Sarkisyan, "51-ya armiya. Boyevoy put" [The 51st Army. Campaign Record], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1983, p 106.
2. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 228, inv. 505, file 28, sheet 7.
3. Ibid., folio 605, inv. 420575, file 1, sheet 7.
4. Ibid., folio 1246, inv. 1, file 15, sheet 1.
5. Ibid., folio 407, inv. 9854, file 2, sheet 38.
6. S.M. Sarkisyan, op. cit., p 112.
7. TsAMO, folio 1246, inv. 1, file 14, sheets 13-14.
8. Ibid., file 12, sheet 40; file 15, sheet 1.
9. Ibid., sheet 41.
10. S.M. Sarkisyan, op. cit., p 113.

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10272

Experience of Military Scientific Society Under Kiev District Officer Club

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[Article, published under the heading "Military History Work in the Troops and VUZes," by Col Gen (Res) A.I. Kozhevnikov, chairman of the Military Scientific Society and candidate of military sciences: "From the Experience of Military Scientific Society Under Kiev District Officer Club"]

[Text] The Military Scientific Society [VNO] has been operating over 30 years under the Kiev District Officer Club. (1) Its members are basically generals and officers who have served in the ranks of the Armed Forces and are in the reserves or retired. These are people with rich vital, military, organizational and combat experience.

The basic areas of work in the collective's activities are: research on the military-theoretical heritage of V.I. Lenin, the combat experience of defending our motherland; the elaboration and elucidation of military history problems; military patriotic indoctrination of the Soviet people, particularly the youth; the writing of memoirs, reminiscences and essays on operations and battles as well as the campaign record of the units, formations and field forces of the Soviet Army and Navy.

The adopted by-laws set out the structure, organization and procedure of activities of the VNO, the tasks of its council and presidium as well as the rights and duties of the members and other questions.

Operating in the collective are the following sections: operational-tactical, military history, military patriotic, rocket-artillery, Air Forces, rear services, medical and border. Their members meet once a month, they discuss the carrying out of assignments on military-scientific, military history and military patriotic work as well as resolve current questions.

The council presidium draws up a plan for the society's activities for 2 years and this is discussed at the general meeting and then approved by the district chief of staff while the plan for military patriotic work is approved by the chief of the political directorate.

The report-election meetings in the sections and in the society are held once every 2 years.

The military history work is focused chiefly on studying and investigating the major operations of the Great Patriotic War, Soviet military art, the history of the organizational development and training of the Soviet Armed Forces as well as the armies of the leading capitalist states. On the basis of the materials of military scientific and military history work, the society annually holds conferences the results of which are generally made available.

Thus, in April 1986, a military history conference was held on the subject "Army Offensive Operations in 1944-1945."

In February 1988, on the basis of investigating the defensive operations in the first and second periods of the Great Patriotic War as well as the memoirs of participants in the fighting and engagements of that period and in honor of the 45th anniversary of the Stalingrad and Kursk Battles, there are plans to hold a practical scientific conference on the question "Army Defensive Operations of 1941-1943."

Proper attention is being given to military history and jubilee conferences with the wide involvement of workers and the youth. In the not distant past, conferences were held devoted to the 40th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, to the Stalingrad and Kursk Battles, the Battle of the Dnieper, the Berlin, Korsun-Shevchenkivskiy and other operations. Recently, a military history conference was held devoted to the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution and at the end of the year a conference has been planned in honor of the 70th anniversary of the establishing of the Soviet Army and Navy.

Reader conferences play an important part in the military history work. For a more profound familiarizing of the collective's members with the materials on the history of World War II in the aim of employing these in military scientific, military history and military patriotic work, the society council has organized conferences on the 6-volume history of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945 and the 12-volume history of World War II of 1939-1945. Conferences are also being held on military memoir works and books by Soviet writers.

For a more thorough study of the operations carried out by Soviet troops during the years of the Great Patriotic War on Ukrainian territory as well as for propagandizing the heroic feats of the soldiers among the republic's workers, the VNO Council periodically organizes military history trips to the sites of combat.

In September 1981 and 1986, trips were held to the sites of the fighting of units and formations from the Southwestern Front in defending Kiev in 1941 as well as in the liberation of the republic's capital by the First Ukrainian Front in 1943. Participants of those events were involved in the trips and meetings with the youth and soldiers. They shared their recollections and described the combat activities of the units and formations as well as the heroism of the men in fighting the Nazi invaders. For example, there were good responses to the talks at a meeting with the youth in September 1986 and devoted to the 45th anniversary of the 1941 Kiev Operation by the former commissar of the 87th Rifle Division, Col (Ret) P.U. Didenko, the commander of the Antitank Artillery Regiment of the 1st Antitank Artillery Brigade,

Col (Ret) M.A. Belousov, the chief of the operations section of the staff of the 10th Tank Division, Col (Ret) P.K. Perevertun, the Chief of Staff of the Antitank Detachment of the Southwestern Front, Col (Ret) D.D. Dotsenko, the commissar of the partisan detachment, Capt (Ret) G.S. Kutsan and others.

One of the forms of military history work is the writing of military memoirs, military history essays and essays on the campaign record of units and formations and the publishing of articles in journals and newspapers. Just over the last 10 years, some 60 books have been published and hundreds of articles printed in the periodic press. As a total some 182 books have come out, some 7,000 essays and articles have been written, more than 1,000 lectures and reports were worked up and over 300 reviews and replies.

From among the military memoirs which are of importance for the military patriotic indoctrination of the youth, we might mention the books by the society members: Twice Hero of the Soviet Union, Lt Gen (Ret) Z.K. Slyusarenko "Posledniy vystrel" [The Last Round] and "Synovniy dolg" [Filial Duty]; Twice Hero of the Soviet Union, Col (Ret) S.F. Shutov "Krasnaya strela" [The Red Arrow]; Heroes of the Soviet Union, Cols (Ret) L.N. Kurist "Atakuyat tankisty" [The Tank Troops Are Attacking] and S.P. Serykh "Bessmertnyy batalon" [Immortal Battalion]; Lt Gen (Ret) V.S. Vasilyev "I dukh nash molod" [And Our Spirit is Young]; Maj Gen (Ret) A.I. Olennikov "Rozhdennaya na zemle Zaporozhskoy" [Born on Zaporozhy Land]; Col (Ret) K.V. Ivanov "Shla diviziya na zapad" [The Division as Moving West]; Maj Gen (Ret) M.D. Maksimtsev "Soldat Rodiny" [A Soldier of the Motherland]; Cols (Ret) I.V. Dubinskiy "Soldatskiy khleb" [A Soldier's Bread] and "Kontrudar" [Counterstrike], Ya.F. Zhmachenko "Podvig komandarma" [The Army Commander's Feat], A.G. Bogatyrev "Ognevoy val" [Rolling Barrage] and others.

Over the last 2 years, the memoirs have appeared of Gens and Officers (Ret) M.A. Belousov, L.T. Burchenko, G.I. Ganopolskiy, A.G. Gromov, N.I. Zavyalov, I.F. Yevdokimov, L.I. Kolesnikov, V.G. Pilinskiy, K.V. Sukhov, V.I. Sosnin, Ye.Ya. Raygorodskiy and others.

Of interest are the memoirs by the retired and reserve Gens and Officers V.F. Chizh, M.F. Krotov, G.S. Shupik, V.N. Sazonov, V.M. Kramar, P.T. Andrushchenko, N.S. Korolev, A.G. Pryadko, Ya.I. Shchepennikov, N.A. Ushakov and others.

In the military patriotic work chief attention has been focused on the heroic-patriotic and international indoctrination of the soldiers and the youth. For these purposes they plan and hold evenings and special-subject mornings for the soldiers of the garrison and the youth of Kiev; speeches giving reports and remembrances to the soldiers; Lenin lessons and courage lessons in the school; collective trips to troop units of the district garrisons; reports on the special trips of the Komsomol Central

Committee, the society for the preservation of historical and cultural monuments; meetings with workers of the socialist states arriving on friendship trips and trips by the society members to socialist states; radio and television talks.

Our people has a heroic history. In our military history and particularly our military patriotic work, we turn frequently to Great October the 70th anniversary of which our people and all progressive mankind are celebrating this year and we learn from the heroic examples of the Civil War. The VNO has 17 participants of the Civil War among whom are the zealous propagandists Maj Gens (Ret) A.I. Aleynikov, N.G. Kostev, N.D. Ignatov, Z.T. Babaskin, Ya.I. Shchepennikov, V.G. Shpagin and Cols (Ret) I.V. Kubinskiy, Ye.O. German, Ya.F. Zhmachenko, I.K. Matusevich and I.M. Polkov.

For better quality speeches to the men of the garrisons and the youth, the members of the lecture groups, after carefully preparing the reports and lectures, submit them for discussion and approval to sessions of the sections as well as to commissions on military patriotic work.

The society sections maintain close ties with the museums and schools of Kiev and other cities in the Ukraine and provide them with help in organizing the combat glory rooms, in providing new exhibits and various historical materials and by actively carrying out military patriotic work with school children. Thus, in the 61st Middle School of Kiev there is the museum of the 3d Guards Tank Army set up under the leadership of the Twice Hero of the Soviet Union, Lt Gen (Ret) Z.K. Slyusarenko. Hero of the Soviet Union, Maj Gen Avn (Ret) G.M. Denisov helped the 227th Middle School in organizing a museum of the 3d Air Army in the ranks of which he fought.

Members of the VNO (Maj Gens (Ret) T.F. Umanskiy, I.I. Korkin and I.I. Kaurkin, Col (Ret) K.V. Ivanov and others) direct the holding of military sports games and paramilitary hikes for the student youth to the sites of the military and labor glory of the Soviet people and their Armed Forces.

Many society members such as Twice Hero of the Soviet Union Lt Gen (Ret) Z.K. Slyusarenko and Hero of the Soviet Union, Maj Gen (Ret) G.M. Denisov, are the chairmen or members of the veteran councils of those units, formations and field forces where they served during the war. They actively conduct organizing work in these councils, they travel to the cities of their formation and to the sites of battles and hold veteran meetings with the youth.

The VNO maintains constant ties and close cooperation with the district political directorate and the district Officer Club, the Komsomol Central Committee and the DOSAAF, with the city and rayon party and Komsomol committees, with the Kiev Municipal Section of the Soviet War Veterans Committee, with the city and rayon

military commissariats with the Ananiye [Knowledge] Society and the Society for the Preservation of Ukrainian Historical and Cultural Monuments.

In February 1987, a meeting was held between the internationalist pilots of the 1930s-1980s. This was attended by war and labor veterans, by young soldiers from the Armed Forces, the student youth, co-workers from the general consulates of the socialist countries in Kiev, by students from the socialist countries studying in the military schools. They described the military chronicle of the feat of the pilots in Spanish skies, brief episodes from the life of aviators who carried out their international duty in Afghanistan and those who participated in eliminating the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant. The very participants of the fighting spoke: for Spain, Lt Gen Avn (Ret) D.P. Galunov, at Khalkhin-Gol, Maj Gen Avn (Ret) N.D. Ignatov, on the fronts of the Great Patriotic War, Heroes of the Soviet Union, Col (Ret) K.V. Sukhov, Maj (Ret) M.I. Dolin, in the Afghan skies, Honored Military Pilot of the USSR O.G. Orlov, and the participant in eliminating the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, Hero of the Soviet Union, Maj Gen Avn N.T. Antoshkin, as well as the Vice Consul of Mongolia in Kiev, Tserengiyn Surenkhoroloo and Captain of the Polish Army Zdislaw Endysiak. They all noted the great importance of the liberating mission of the Soviet Armed Forces during the years of the Great Patriotic War and the international aid to the armies of the fraternal countries in the postwar years.

The communists are the organizing element and dependable support of the council. They set the example of militance and efficiency in work. The primary party organization of the collective numbers 186 CPSU members, of which 75 percent have over 40 years of membership in the party. At various times it has been headed by Hero of the Soviet Union, Col (Res) M.M. Andrusenko, Lt Gen (Res) V.I. Bibikov, Maj Gen (Ret) G.Z. Klimov, Col (Ret) K.V. Ivanov and at present, by Maj Gen (Res) L.P. Kuleshov.

In light of the decisions of the 27th Congress, the January and June (1987) Plenums of the CPSU Central Committee, the VNO is steadily reorganizing its activities. At the center of attention is a higher military scientific level of the works being worked out, the strengthening of their tie to life, better quality of the memoir and artistic works and greater effectiveness from the military history and patriotic work.

The combat experience of war veterans is an invaluable achievement of the Soviet people and their Armed Forces. The skillful use of this should help to enrich our military science and culture and indoctrinate feelings of socialist patriotism and internationalism in the Soviet people.

Footnote

1. Military scientific societies in the USSR are voluntary organizations of generals, admirals and officers in the reserve or retired. They are set up under the officer clubs in the aim of disseminating military, political and technical knowledge.

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RVGK Artillery in First Period of War

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[Article, published under the heading "On Rocket Troop and Artillery Day," by Col (Ret) N.Ye. Medvedev: "RVGK Artillery in the First Period of the War"]

[Text] According to Soviet military science of the prewar years, fire damage to the enemy should be carried out by launching a simultaneous strike by the forces of all the combat arms to the entire depth of the enemy defenses. Here the main role was assigned to the artillery which in organizational terms was split into the organic and which was part of the subunits (starting from the battalion), the units and formations and the artillery of the Reserve of the High Command (RGK). In the RGK artillery there was to be the units of ground and antiaircraft artillery designed for qualitative, quantitative and special reinforcing of the artillery of the corps and divisions. (1) The RGK artillery units, as a rule, were part of the corps and divisional long-range (DD) artillery groups, the main task of which was to combat enemy artillery, or was included in an artillery destruction (AR) group established with the necessity of destroying the heavily fortified enemy defensive zones. (2) There was no provision to establish antitank units of the RGK. The World War II which had broken out repudiated this viewpoint, as in the course of its operations large masses of tanks were employed and they could be stopped only by effective antitank weapons. However, the decision to constitute ten antitank artillery brigades of the RGK (3) was taken only at the end of April 1941.

The constituting of the brigades started in mid-May 1941 directly in the western border military districts. The date for final readiness for a majority of them was set as of 1 July 1941. Such a short interval of time was not sufficient to properly man, train and coordinate the brigades as fighting units. Due to the shortage of antitank weapons, the Main Artillery Directorate began arming the constituted formations with 76-mm and 85-mm antiaircraft cannons. The situation was much worse with providing the brigades with traction and transport. According to data on 12 June 1941, they had virtually no tractors and had received only 20 percent of the motor vehicles prescribed by the TOE.

Table 1

Distribution of RGK Artillery Units and Formations Prior to War*

No.	Military Districts (Fronts)	Units and Formations	Cannon regts. (pap)	Howitzer regts. (gap)	Antitank brigades (ptab)	Separate mortar btlns. (ominb)	Separate artillery btlns. (oad)	Separate heavy cannon btlns. (otpb)
1	Leningrad Military District (Northern Front)		2	5	--	1	--	--
2	Baltic Special Military District (Northwestern Front)		--	3	2	--	--	--
3	Western Special Military District (Western Front)		3	7	3	1	1	--
4	Kiev Special Military Districts (Southwestern Front)		3	10	5	--	4	--
5	Odessa Military District (9th Separate Army)		1	1	--	--	1	--
6	Remaining military districts and high command reserve		5	34	--	7	6	2
		TOTAL:	14	60	10	9	12	2

* Compiled from the data in: "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 3, 1974; Vol 4, 1975; "Artilleriya v oboronitelnykh operatsiyakh Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Artillery in the Defensive Operations of the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, Book 1, 1956; "Artilleriya v nastupatelnykh operatsiyakh Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Artillery in the Offensive Operations of the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, Book 1, 1964; "Istrebitelno-protivotankovaya artilleriya v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Antitank Artillery in the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1957.

Prior to the war, there was virtually no means for establishing the antiaircraft artillery units of the RGK. What was available went to man the air defense antiaircraft units assigned to cover installations on the nation's territory. In the troops not even all the corps and divisions had the prescribed separate antiaircraft artillery battalions of SZA [medium-caliber antiaircraft artillery] and MZA [small-caliber antiaircraft artillery].(4) A portion of the antiaircraft weapons of the GAU [Main Artillery Directorate] was turned over to constitute the antitank artillery brigades.

As a total, according to the wartime TOE, the Soviet Army was to have 67,335 guns and mortars, including 4,854 in the RGK units. Prior to the war in the RGK artillery there were 60 howitzer regiments and 14 cannon artillery regiments, 10 antitank artillery

brigades(5) and several separate battalions and batteries, comprising 8 percent of all the artillery. These were armed predominantly with large-caliber guns: 122-220-mm cannons, 152-305-mm howitzers and 280-mm mortars(6) (60 percent). The antitank guns and mortars were, respectively, 28 and 12 percent.

The distribution of the RGK artillery units between the districts on the eve of the war was not equal. As can be seen from Table 1, the largest number was positioned on the southwestern strategic sector, where the High Command expected the enemy to launch its main thrust.

Thus, by the start of the Great Patriotic War, the RGK artillery included basically heavy cannon and howitzer artillery units designed for a qualitative reinforcement of

the organic artillery, antitank artillery formations as well as separate mortar battalions. There were no antiaircraft units.

The treacherous attack by Nazi Germany caught our troops in a difficult situation. The enemy's rapid advance into the interior of the nation led to a situation where the plans for the rearming and constituting of many artillery units and formations were actually thwarted. For these same reasons, the cover troops did not receive the personnel, motor transport and tractors assigned to them according to the mobilization plan. This had an extremely negative effect on the combat readiness of the artillery and its rear bodies.

The combating of enemy tanks over the entire Great Patriotic War comprised one of the most important tasks for the Soviet artillery, both organic and RGK. For this reason even in the first months of the fighting against the Nazi hordes, Hq SHC gave great attention to constituting new RVGK (Reserve of the Supreme High Command) artillery units, particularly antitank ones. Just in July-August, some 45 artillery regiments were constituted, including 42 (over 90 percent) antitank defense (PTO) regiments.(7)

In the course of the border engagements and the subsequent fierce battles, the RVGK artillery suffered significant losses. There was a real threat of the loss of the heavy and particularly heavy units which, as a rule, were not involved in the fighting, as they were not adapted to highly fluid combat but were in the reserve of the fronts (armies). In line with this, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief permitted the redeployment of certain RGK artillery units from the fronts (with the exception of the Leningrad) when these were armed basically with 305-mm howitzers and 280-mm mortars into the interior military districts.

In a situation of the decline in the resources of artillery weapons, Headquarters of the RVGK took every measure to maintain the RVGK artillery at the highest possible level and constantly reinforced it by constituting new cannon, howitzer, mortar and antitank regiments as well as including in it in September 1941 all the artillery regiments and antiaircraft artillery battalions from the rifle and mechanized corps due to the elimination of the corps element. In constituting new artillery regiments, emphasis was put on increasing the number of highly maneuverable units designed primarily to counter enemy tanks. For example, there was the rapid constituting of light artillery regiments (lap), antitank defense regiments as well as rocket artillery, this new and effective weapon for hitting enemy personnel. Of the 4,252 guns and mortars directed in 1941 to constitute the RVGK artillery units (not counting the antiaircraft and rocket artillery), some 2,903 guns (69 percent) went for the antitank artillery.(8)

As the experience of the first months of the war was to show, the RVGK antitank brigades and their regiments, under the conditions of the going over of the Soviet Army to the strategic defensive, were very cumbersome and difficult to control. In the course of the fluid, maneuvering battles and engagements, the necessity appeared of reinforcing not only the armies but also the rifle divisions and even the regiments with artillery antitank weapons. For this, at the given stage of the war, it was better to have not large artillery formations in the RVGK artillery but rather a large number of small maneuverable antitank units. Considering this, in the autumn of 1941, all the RVGK antitank brigades, with the exception of the 14th Antitank Artillery Brigade which had been constituted in the course of the war on the Leningrad Front, were deconstituted. From the materiel of these formations and the newly provided weapons, in the second half of 1941, 72 antitank artillery regiments of the RVGK of varying organization were constituted. Basically these were light, maneuverable units having four, five or six 4-gun batteries.

Due to the shortage of antitank cannons, for organizing the antitank regiments they employed 37-, 76- and 85-mm antiaircraft cannons. Thus, in July-October 1941, to bring the antitank regiments up to strength they employed 49 SZA battalions and 49 MZA batteries, a total of 770 guns.(9)

From March 1942, the operational army began to receive more and more new 76-mm cannons of the 1942 model (ZIS-3). These began to be used in new antitank regiments as well as replace the antiaircraft guns in the already constituted units. With the release of the antiaircraft guns, they began constituting the RVGK antiaircraft artillery regiments. Moreover, at the start of June 1942, they put under the chief of the Soviet Army Artillery from the national air defenses some 140 separate antiaircraft artillery battalions, 8 separate antiaircraft batteries, 5 antiaircraft armored trains and other subunits(10) and these comprised the backbone of the RVGK antiaircraft artillery units being constituted.

A majority of the organizational changes which occurred in 1941 in the RVGK artillery was dictated by the difficult situation on the front and by the shortage of weapons. It was essential, in particular, to resort to emergency measures involving a weakening of the fire power of the artillery units in order to increase their number. Thus, at the start of September 1941, the RVGK cannon and howitzer regiments were broken up. Their batteries were shifted to the operational army as 2-gun units. New regiments were constituted from the released materiel. The RVGK artillery received the 122-mm and 152-mm howitzer artillery units excluded from the TOE of the rifle and tank divisions and reconstituted as RVGK howitzer artillery regiments.

The RVGK separate mortar battalions were very cumbersome (48 mortars of 107- and 120-mm). For this reason by an order of the NKO [People's Commissar of

Defense] in January 1942, these were deconstituted and on their basis lighter mortar units were established, basically 5-battery mortar regiments (20 mortars in each). By April 1942, the operational army had 49 RVGK mortar regiments and by September, 70 of them.

With the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War, field rocket artillery units began to be constituted rapidly. The first combat vehicles for the new type of weapon were developed in our nation directly on the eve of the war. The simplicity of their manufacture by industry, the high effectiveness of the fire, particularly in firing at personnel, and the enormous moral impact on the enemy—all of this predetermined the rapid growth of rocket artillery. In 1941, the constituting of the first separate batteries was completed and then the rocket artillery battalions. Having highly praised the combat capabilities of the new type of artillery, Hq SHC took decisive measures to develop it. In August, they began constituting eight rocket artillery regiments and then another six. The combat vehicles (launchers) for the rocket artillery, the BM-8 and BM-13, were initially mounted on the chassis of the ZIS-6 motor vehicle and later on the chassis of the T-40 and T-60 tanks and the STZ-5 tractors.(11) In January 1942, in accord with the GKO [State Defense Committee] Decree, they began constituting rocket artillery regiments with a new organization. The battalions of these units, with the obtaining of their own logistic bodies, were able to operate independently.(12)

Hq SHC for the period of conducting the operations reinforced the fronts with rocket artillery units which had been named guards mortar units [GMCh].(13) They were directly under the front commanders. For direct leadership over the combat activities and supply of the GMCh units on the fronts, special headquarters bodies were organized, the front operations groups of the GMCh.(14)

From the spring of 1942, the nation's rear began supplying the Armed Forces with ever-larger amounts of tanks, aircraft, guns, mortars and rocket artillery combat vehicles. A large portion of the received artillery weapons went to constitute the RVGK units. The number of guns and mortars in the RVGK artillery increased constantly. While by the start of the war there were 4,854, by 1 December 1941, there were 5,704, by 1 May 1942 there were 10,080 and by the end of the first period of the war, already 18,133.(15) The changes in the number of RVGK artillery units in the first period of the war are shown in Table 2.

In line with the constant rise in the number of RVGK artillery regiments, the armies began receiving as reinforcements both on the defensive and offensive ten and more regiments each. It became evermore difficult to control such a large number of units with the small artillery staffs of the field forces and for this reason the army artillery chiefs, as a rule, received the RVGK units

as reinforcements for the divisions. However, such practices ran counter to the principle of massing the artillery and its fire. In line with this the need arose of establishing large RVGK artillery formations. At the end of October 1942, the GKO adopted a decree on organizing the RVGK artillery formations for ground and antiaircraft artillery. On 31 October, the People's Commissar of Defense issued an order on establishing artillery and antiaircraft artillery divisions of the RVGK (ad and zenad of the RVGK).

The first RVGK artillery divisions were constituted by incorporating in them 8 artillery regiments of the RVGK (3 howitzer regiments, 2 cannon regiments and 3 anti-tank regiments) and a separate reconnaissance battalion. A portion of the army air defense regiments and the already constituted antiaircraft artillery regiments of the RVGK also went to constitute the antiaircraft artillery divisions. According to the TOE of 22 October 1942, a zenad was to have 4 MZA regiments (48 37-mm cannons and 80 12.7-mm antiaircraft machine guns).(16) By the end of the first period of the war, there were already 11 artillery divisions and 8 RVGK zenad in the operational army.

In reinforcing the fronts, Hq SHC in the course of the operations decisively concentrated the RVGK artillery on the most important sectors of the Soviet-German Front. Thus, in the summer and autumn of 1941, basic attention was given to the Moscow strategic sector. By the end of the Smolensk Engagement, some 50 percent of all the RVGK artillery units had been concentrated on the Western, Reserve and Bryansk Fronts. Of the existing 49 antitank artillery regiments of the RVGK, some 22 had been turned over to these three fronts. A majority of the armies of the Western Front had received as reinforcements, 4-5 RVGK artillery regiments.

In October, during the autumn muddy season, the basic efforts of the artillery were concentrated in the zones of the armies covering the main road arteries and along which the enemy tank columns were pushing toward Moscow. Thus, the 16th Army which was covering the Volokolamsk Highway received as reinforcements 6 antitank artillery regiments, the 5th Army which was defending the Mozhaysk sector received 11, while the 43d Army which was maintaining the defenses on the Maloyaroslavets sector, received 8 regiments and a separate antitank artillery battalion. The density of antitank artillery (PTA) on these sectors was brought up to 6-10 guns per kilometer of front.(17) The remaining armies of the Western Front were reinforced with 1 or 2 regiments. Correspondingly, the PTA density in their zones was low with 1 or 2 guns per kilometer of front.

The cannon, howitzer and mortar units received from the front by the armies were turned over as reinforcement to the rifle divisions which were on the defensive on the main sectors. In the divisions these were usually included in the infantry support (PP) groups and more rarely in the long-range (DD). The fire power of the

Table 2

Change in Number of RVGK Artillery Units in Campaigns of First Period of the War*

Date as of:	Types of Artillery																	
	Antitank				Cannon				Howitzer				Mortar				Rocket	
	Antitank brigade	Antitank regiment	Light artillery regiment	Total regiment**	Proportional amount, %	Cannon artillery regiment, heavy cannon regiment	Separate heavy artillery divisions	Total regiment**	Proportional amount, %	Howitzer artillery regiment, heavy howitzer regiment	Separate heavy artillery regiment	Total regiment**	Proportional amount, %	Mortar regiment	Mortar division (mortar btln)	Total regiment**	Proportional amount, %	Regiments
22 Jun 41	10	—	—	23	18	14	2	15	14	60	13	64	58	—	11	11	10	—
1 Dec 41	1	56	—	58	23	101	1	101	40	53	15	68	23	—	14	14	3	52
1 May 42	1	120	—	122	21	176	4	177	30	145	13	149	26	63	—	63	11	56
15-20 Nov 42	—	161	79	240	22	198	4	199	18	192	13	196	17	73	10	83	7	98

* Compiled from data of: "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...." Vols 3, 4; "Artilleriya v oboronitelnykh....," Book 1; "Artilleriya v nastupatelnykh....," Book 1; "Istrebitelno-protivotankovaya artilleriya...."

** In calculating the number of regiments, we have arbitrarily considered that three separate cannon (howitzer) battalions and three rocket artillery battalions are the equivalent in fire power of a regiment. One mortar battalion is considered the equal of a mortar regiment.

artillery of the divisions more and more frequently began to increase due to rocket artillery the fire volley of which provided a high effect, particularly in firing against enemy personnel.(18)

During the summer of 1942, the chief attention of Hq SHC was focused on the southwestern and then the Stalingrad sectors. The basic mass of reserves, including artillery, went here. The amount of RVGK artillery participating in the defensive battles around Leningrad was continuously built up by reinforcing the fronts from the reserves of Hq SHC. Thus, while on 12 July 1942, the RVGK artillery units here had 4,282 guns and mortars, on 18 November, the figure was 12,087,(19) that is, their number had trebled. Over July up to the first half of October 1942, Hq SHC sent the fronts fighting on the Stalingrad sector some 105 artillery regiments and 16 battalions of its reserve (40 antitank regiments),(20) 16 cannon regiments, 14 antiaircraft regiments, 3 mortar regiments, 32 rocket artillery regiments and 16 rocket battalions).

The front commanders turned over virtually all the RVGK artillery units, as a rule, to the first echelon armies and this is explained by their acute need for their own artillery. The armies fighting on the main sectors received as reinforcements 10 and more RVGK artillery regiments. For example, the 62d Army (Southeastern Front on 1 September) had 16 RVGK artillery units.(21)

In line with the growing saturation of the troops with the RVGK artillery in the fighting around Stalingrad, all the elements from the rifle division up to the front, began to systematically receive artillery antitank reserves (APTR): one or two iptap in the armies and from one to five iptap in the fronts.(22) The cannon regiments were incorporated in the army DD artillery groups.

In conducting the defensive fighting directly in the city, by a decision of the Southwestern Front Military Council of 14 December, drawing on the RVGK regiments

attached previously to the 62d and 64th armies, a front artillery group (FAG) was organized. It also included units of RVGK antiaircraft artillery and artillery from the Volga Naval Flotilla. The group was led by the deputy artillery chief of the front, Maj Gen Art V.P. Dmitriyev. The FAG included up to 250 guns and mortars. By extensive trajectory maneuvering and by massing the artillery fire of the army and the FAG, at individual moments in the most intense fighting in Stalingrad, on the defensive sectors of the 62d Army, it was possible to create an artillery density up to 110 guns and mortars per kilometer of front.⁽²³⁾ The wide maneuvering of the fire of large masses of artillery ensured the stubbornness and tenacity of the troops in the defensive fighting both around Stalingrad and in the city itself.

In the course of the operations of the first period of the Great Patriotic War, the RVGK artillery underwent both quantitative and qualitative change. Units of rocket and antiaircraft artillery appeared in it. The organizational structure and armament of the units were substantially changed.

The quantitative growth of the RVGK artillery (from 4,854 to 18,133 guns and mortars), and the incorporation in it of units armed with different types of weapons, mortars and rocket artillery launchers altered its structure. Due to the RVGK artillery, the organic artillery was strengthened not only in qualitative but also quantitative terms. The proportional amount of the RVGK artillery according to TOE numbers rose from 8 to 20 percent in the artillery of the Soviet Army.

With the shifting of the national economy to a wartime footing and by strengthening the power of the artillery industry, a rapid growth of the RVGK artillery commenced. Antitank and rocket artillery units were constituted with particular intensity and from the summer of 1942, also the antiaircraft artillery units. The ratio of the different types of artillery changed. While in the prewar period, over one-half of all the regiments (see Table 2) was made up of howitzer artillery, by the end of the first period of the war first place was now held by the antiaircraft artillery (24 percent) and antitank artillery (22 percent). The proportional amount of howitzer artillery had declined to 17 percent. Rocket artillery which just appeared at the start of the war was 12 percent of the total amount of RVGK artillery.

The fronts on the defensive on the most important operational sectors were given 30-40 RVGK artillery regiments, while an army received 8-10 and more. The necessity of centralizing control over the large number of separate RVGK artillery units raised the question of establishing artillery divisions (artillery and antiaircraft artillery divisions of the RVGK). The trend toward constituting large RVGK artillery formations underwent further development in the second period of the Great Patriotic War.

Hq SHC and the command of the fronts, in widely maneuvering the RVGK artillery formations, at the crucial moment reinforced the fronts (armies) with artillery and due to this there was a significant increase in the artillery density during the defensive and offensive operations.

Footnotes

1. "Boyevoy ustav artillerii RKKA" [Artillery Field Manual of the Worker-Peasant Red Army], Part 2, 1937 (BUA-II-37), Moscow, Voenizdat, 1937, p 17.

2. Ibid., pp 30-32.

3. The antitank artillery brigades which consisted of two regiments of six-division size were powerful artillery formations. According to the TOE a brigade had 120 antitank guns, 16 MZ\ antiaircraft guns and 12 large-caliber antiaircraft machine guns ("Istrebitelno-protivotankovaya artilleriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Antitank Artillery in the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1957, p 30).

4. On 1 June 1941, the organic antiaircraft artillery numbered 1,382 guns while according to the TOE there should have been 4,900 (TsAMO [Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense], folio 81, inv. 11624, file 296, sheet 5).

5. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 3, 1974, p 421.

6. TsAMO SSSR, folio 81, inv. 28716, file 1, sheets 176, 180-183.

7. "Artilleriya v oboronitelnykh operatsiyakh Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Artillery in the Defensive Operations of the Great Patriotic War], Book 1, p 56.

8. "Istrebitelno-protivotankovaya artilleriya...", pp 24-25.

9. Ibid., p 23.

10. Ibid., p 27.

11. TsAMO, folio 135, inv. 12679, file 67, sheets 252-255.

12. Ibid., folio 2, inv. 795437, file 16, sheets 16-18.

13. The rocket artillery units were given the name guards mortar units (GMCh) by the GKO Decree of 8 September 1941.

14. For more detail on the rise and development of rocket artillery, see: *Voyenno-istoricheskiy zhurnal*, No 12, 1976, pp 24-34.

15. "Artilleriya v nastupatelnykh operatsiyakh Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Artillery in the Offensive Operations of the Great Patriotic War], Book 1, p 435.

16. "Artilleriya v oboronitelnykh....," Book 1, p412.

17. Ibid., p 102.

18. TsAMO, folio 69, inv. 14466, file 28, sheets 74, 75.

19. "Artilleriya v oboronitelnykh....," Book 1, pp 402-416.

20. By an order of the NKO, the antitank artillery on 1 July 1942 was renamed the antitank ["istrebitelno-protivotankovaya"] artillery.

21. "Artilleriya v oboronitelnykh....," Book 1, pp 330, 402.

22. Ibid., p 400.

23. Ibid., pp 382-383.

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10272

Articles not translated in *Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No 11, Nov 87
18010066 Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 11, Nov 87
(signed to press 23 Oct 87) p 2

From the Works of V.I. Lenin (p 10) (unattributed)

Participation of Foreign Internationalists in Great October Socialist Revolution (pp 11-15) (V.G. Krasnov)

Sailors of Petrograd in October Days of 1917 (pp 16-18) (A.I. Yefremov)

The 55th Reserve Infantry Regiment in the Fighting to Establish Soviet Power in Moscow (pp 19-24) (I.N. Pavlov)

On Eliminating the Central Headquarters Bodies of the Russian Army (pp 25-28) (A.S. Senin)

The Central Museum of the Revolution of the USSR (pp 29-33) (T.G. Shumnaya)

With the Party Forever (pp 34-37) (V.N. Losev)

Unmasking the Falsification of the Activities of the Bolshevik Party (March-October 1917) (pp 38-43) (G.N. Kocheshkov)

Six Hundred Years of Domestic Artillery (pp 88-89) (Yu.G. Perechnev)

Red Armymen, Forward! (pp 90-91) (M.M. Kiryan)

On the Superior Military Rank of Generalissimo (p 92) (A.S. Zubarev, V.A. Yegorshin)

Twentieth Anniversary of the Order of the October Revolution (pp 93-94) (S.N. Puchkov)

You Ask—We Reply (pp 94-96) (Unattributed)

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